

227 d 7

SEVENTEEN SERMONS

ON SOME OF THE
MOST IMPORTANT POINTS
O N
NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION,
RESPECTING THE
HAPPINESS BOTH OF THE PRESENT, AND OF
A FUTURE LIFE.

TOGETHER WITH AN
A P P E N D I X,
CONTAINING A
BRIEF AND DISPASSIONATE VIEW
O F T H E
S E V E R A L D I F F I C U L T I E S
R E S P E C T I V E L Y A T T E N D I N G T H E
O R T H O D O X , A R I A N , A N D S O C I N I A N S Y S T E M S
I N R E G A R D T O
T H E H O L Y T R I N I T Y.

BY JOSIAH TUCKER, D.D.
DEAN OF GLOCESTER.

G L O C E S T E R :
PRINTED BY R. RAIKES;
AND SOLD BY
J. RIVINGTON, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON.
M. DCC. LXXVI.

REV. J. H. MONROE

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF

THE

AND OF

THE

THE

THE

OF THE

THE



THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

C O N T E N T S.

SERMON I. ROM. ix. 21. Hath not the Potter

Power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour? *Page 1—37.---In which Discourse God is considered in the two-fold Capacity of a Potter forming the passive Clay, and infusing into it what Gifts and Endowments he thinks proper ;---and afterwards of a Judge presiding over such of his Creatures, whom he had made to be moral and intellectual Agents, and rewarding or punishing them according to their Deeds.*

SERMON II. EPHES. ii. 9, 10. By Grace ye

are saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves : It is the Gift of God ; not of Works, lest any Man should boast. *Page 38—49.---Proving both from the Text and Context, that the Salvation here described, as the alone Gift of God, was a Salvation by Grace, and not a Salvation by Faith ; and shewing, that this Kind of Salvation being the mere Gift of God, is therefore absolute and unconditional, and granted to us, like the Work of Creation, without any Concurrence of our own : Whereas the Salvation by Faith, answering to the Gift of Preservation, is a relative Thing, and necessarily supposes the Concurrence of our own Endeavours, or the right Application of proper Means towards the obtaining of a good End.*

C O N T E N T S.

SERMON III. LUKE xvii. 10. When ye shall have done all those Things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable Servants. P. 51—62.---*Shewing why our very best and most valuable Performances cannot be productive of any Benefit or Advantage to Almighty God; shewing also in what Sense, and on what Account, these very same Performances do necessarily contribute to our own Interest and Happiness both here and hereafter.*

SERMON IV. 1 JOHN iii. 7, 8. Let no Man deceive you: He that doth Righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that committeth Sin is of the Devil. P. 63---77.---*In this Discourse the Cases of instantaneous and of gradual Conversions are distinctly considered; and the proper Inferences and Deductions respectively resulting from such Cases, are pointed out.*

SERMON V. LUKE xxiii. 39---43. One of the Malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation? And we indeed justly For we receive the due Reward of our Deeds: But this Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy

C O N T E N T S.

thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. P. 79---93.---*Shewing, that this Passage of Scripture doth not at all relate to the Case of a sudden Conversion, or a death-bed Repentance, tho' too commonly imagined to be applicable to such a Case;---proving also, that nothing can be inferred from the Example of the penitent Thief on the Cross, or from the Scope and Tendency of our Lord's Conversation with him, which can justly countenance any Delays, or Procrastinations of Repentance.*

SERMON VI. [*preached before the Contributors to the Bristol Infirmary at their Anniversary Meeting on March 18, 1745---6, and published at their Request for the Perusal of the Patients in the Infirmary*] 1 COR. ix. 22. That I might by all Means save some P. 95---130.---*Shewing, that thro' the Abuse of the great Blessing of Liberty, which the common People of this Nation enjoy above all other People upon Earth, they are become debauched, licentious, and immoral to an alarming Degree; and that Infirmarys, among other good Uses, ought to be applied, as Correctives and Reformatories, to stem that Torrent of Vice, Lewdness, and Immorality, which is breaking in upon us.*

SERMON VII. 1 TIMOTHY iv. 8. Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having the Promise

C O N T E N T S.

Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. P. 131---149. - *Proving, that the great Ends to be proposed by true and genuine Religion, by the Coercions of good Government, and by a right Employment of our Time and Talents must necessarily center, and do in fact all coincide, as far as the Happiness of the present Life is concerned:---Proving therefore, that these three systems of Religion, Government, and Commerce, are all the Parts of one general Plan of Providence, which we, for the Sake of Distinctness, and in order to accommodate the Subjects to our own imperfect Capacities and Comprehensions, are obliged to consider in separate and detached Views.*

SERMON VIII. 1 COR. vii. 31. They that use this World, as not abusing it. P. 151---163.---*Demonstrating, that the vulgar Notion of Luxury's being the Means of employing a greater Number of Hands, than otherwise would have found Employment, and consequently of being thereby beneficial to Commerce, is A GRAND MISTAKE, founded on superficial and shallow Observations;---proving therefore, that the Principles of pure and uncorrupted Morals will ever be found to be the best Rules for promoting and extending mutual and universal Commerce.*

SERMON IX. [*a Lent Lecture*] 2 COR. ii. 27. In Fastings often. P. 167---177.---*The Scope of*
of

C O N T E N T S.

of this Discourse is to give a rational Account, and to set forth the moral Uses of the Institution of Lent. — N. B. This Discourse was preached at one of Mr. COLSTON's Lent Lectures in Bristol. This pious and exemplary Man both founded a Set of Lectures in Bristol, and also fixed on certain Subjects to be discoursed upon. The Salary annexed to these Lectures hath been lost many Years ago: But the Clergy of the City have revived the Institution, and still preach the Lectures gratis. Moreover it hath been the Aim of the Author of these Discourses, to conform for the most Part to Mr. COLSTON's Plan, in the Choice of Subjects.

SERMON X. [*The Duty and Necessity of Restitution, another Lent Lecture*] LUKE ix. 28. If I have taken any Thing from any Man, by false Accusation, I restore fourfold. P. 179---191.---*In this Lecture the indispensable Duty of Restitution in its several Branches, is particularly inculcated: And it is also made fully to appear, that Injuries done to the Public Revenue, and to the Characters of Persons in high Stations (tho' seldom regarded as criminal, nay sometimes rather extolled as meritorious) are of a more atrocious Nature, than Injuries done to private Property, or to private Characters.*

SERMON XI. [*On the manifold Errors and Corruptions of the Church of Rome, another*
Lent

C O N T E N T S.

Lent *Lecture*] MATHEW xv. 9. Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.---
P. 193---209.---In this Discourse the Errors and Corruptions of Popery are divided into two Sorts or Classes, viz. 1st. Those which are merely, or for the most Part only absurd; and, 2dly, those which are really mischievous in their Consequences, and destructive of the Peace and Welfare of Society, as well as absurd. And the Conduct, which true and consistent Protestants ought to hold in respect to both these Sorts, is pointed out and enforced.

SERMON XII. [*The real Errors of the Church of Rome compared with the imaginary Errors invidiously and falsely ascribed to the Church of England by its Enemies and Defamers, another Lent Lecture*] MATT. xv. 9. Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.---
P. 211---234.---In this Discourse the Parallel pretended to be drawn between the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and of other Errors of the Church of Rome, is proved to be false and groundless; and it is shewn in various Lights, and from a Variety of Circumstances, that this Confidence of Boasting against the Church of England is empty and vain.

SERMON XIII. [*On the Uses and Abuses of auricular Confession, another Lent Lecture*]

JAMES

C O N T E N T S.

JAMES v. 16. Confess your Faults one to another. P. 235---249.---*Pointing out the manifold Evils occasioned in the Church of Rome by her insisting on the Practice of auricular Confession to a Priest, as a Duty absolutely necessary for all Persons, and in all Situations; which Practice at the most can be only considered as an occasional Duty, resulting from particular Cases, and owing to very peculiar Circumstances.*

SERMON XIV. [On the Sin and Danger of improper Curiosity in Matters of Religion, another Lent Lecture] JOHN xxi. 22. What is that to thee? Follow thou me. P. 251---264.---*In this Discourse the Line is attempted to be drawn between such Parts in the deep Mysteries of our Religion, which appear to be unknowable, and such as are knowable: And our proper Duty is shewn to consist in acquiescing in our Ignorance respecting the former, and in discharging all those moral and religious Offices, which are required of us in Consequence of the latter.*

SERMON XV. [Preached both at a Visitation and an Ordination] HEBREWS i. 1. God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son. P. 265---287.---*Setting forth the different Periods and Dispensations of Religion*

a

C O N T E N T S,

ligion from first to last; and explaining, in what Sense every Dispensation, whether general or particular, must have something in it fixt and invulnerable, and in what Sense also it may admit of Variety and Alterations.

SERMON XVI. [*Preached before the Governors of the Charity Schools in London, at their Anniversary Meeting, May 7, 1766*] PROVERBS xxii. 6. Train up a Child in the Way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it. P. 289---313.---*In this Discourse the Necessity of inculcating the saving Truths of the Gospel, and of enforcing the Duty of practical Religion into the Minds of Children, and especially of Children of the poorer Sort, is recommended from the double Consideration, that if the Children of the Poor were not instructed in what is right, they will not, they cannot, remain in a neutral State, but will unavoidably learn what is wrong;---and it is also shewn, that this Mode of proceeding, by Means of Charity-Schools, is almost the only one now left [Infirmaryes being the other] consistently with our present Ideas of constitutional Liberty, for inculcating into the lower Class of People the Duties of living godlily, righteously, and soberly in this present World.*

SERMON XVII. [*A Sermon preached on the Anniversary of the 30th of January; when a Ru-*
mour

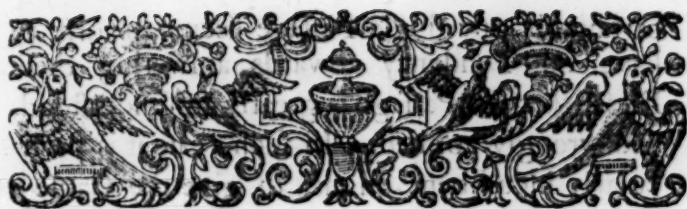
C O N T E N T S.

mour was spread of a Design to abolish the Institution of the Day.] 1 PETER ii. 17. Fear God, honour the King. P. 315---328.---In this Discourse, the Foundation of the Divine Government over moral and rational Agents is shewn to consist in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, each of them in an infinite Degree; therefore our Obedience to such a Government ought to be without any Limitation, Exception, or Reserve. The Foundation of all human Governments is shewn to consist likewise in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness,---but each of these in a very finite and imperfect Manner, even at the best, and often subject to great Changes and Revolutions for the worse: Therefore our Obedience to such Governments ought not to be absolute, or unlimited, without any Reserves or Exceptions. Nevertheless as human Governments there must be, notwithstanding all their Faults and Imperfections, the general Duty of the Subject is certainly Obedience and Non-Resistance; and the exceptive Cases of Resistance must be left to the natural Feelings of Mankind, which are seldom or never wanting to advertise us in all dangerous Cases of this Nature.—Hence an Application to the Times past, as well as to the present, respecting the Use which ought to be made of this Doctrine.

SERMONS

2

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
IN TWO VOLUMES
BY NATHANIEL BENTLEY
OF THE BOSTON BAR
VOL. I.
BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY
J. B. BENTLEY, 1857.



S E R M O N S

O N

Important Subjects.



S E R M O N I.

ROM. ix, 21.

Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay of the same Lump, to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour ?



S all the Holy Scriptures were given by Inspiration of God, we may rest assured, that every Thing which they recommend, is *profitable* for the Purposes of a good and holy Life. And we may be very

B

certain

certain, if any single Passage seems at first to have no Tendency towards answering these Ends, that the Passage is greatly misunderstood, and wrongly applied.---In such a case it is particularly incumbent on us, to give the Cause a thorough Hearing, and to have the whole Scope and Circumstance of the Doctrine maturely examined. After that we may venture to promise, that every such difficult Place of Holy Scripture will appear in a very different Light from what it did before; and approve itself worthy to have proceeded from that Being, who is all Wisdom and Goodness, and who *delighteth not in the Death of a Sinner, but would rather that he should turn from his Sin, and be saved.*

AND I hope to make it evident in the following Discourse, that these Observations are most remarkably verified in Relation to this famous Passage of the Text: So that from a due Consideration of the Words before us, there will result many important Lessons profitable for the aforesaid good Purposes of Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, and Instruction in Righteousness; in Consequence of which a Christian Audience may be greatly edified: And St. PAUL be acknowledged to furnish the best of Motives to good Works.

IN the Prosecution of which Subject,

I. I propose to open and explain the Context.---By doing this we shall be able to see clearly

clearly into the Views and Intentions of the Apostle, when he used this Similitude of the Potter and the Clay.

II. I shall endeavour to set forth in what Respects the Potter's Power over the Clay in the Formation of various Vessels, is really parallel with the various Dispensations of Providence towards Mankind.

III. THIS will bring me to shew in what Instances the Parallel would fail, were it to be attempted to be carried farther on.

IV. FROM a View of all which I intend in the last Place to draw some Inferences, and so conclude with a few Deductions more immediately relating to the Practice of a good Life.

I. MY Endeavour is to open and explain the Context.

THIS will give us the best Insight into the real Intention of the Apostle in using this Similitude of the Potter and the Clay, and of the Vessels made, some to Honour, and others to Dishonour.

Now we must observe, That in the Beginning of this Epistle, the great Point, which the Apostle laboured so earnestly to prove both to Jew and Gentile, was this:---*The Necessity of their believing in a Saviour Jesus Christ, in Order to be ensured of the Efficacy of Repentance, and Certainty of Salvation, obtained by him:---And that, if they neglected these Offers of Grace and*

Mercy, they would be assuredly cast off, notwithstanding any flattering Hopes they might entertain.---

For all the World was become guilty before GOD : And as all had sinned, and come short of the Glory of GOD, so, if they were to be justified at all, it must be freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption, that is in CHRIST JESUS, whom GOD hath set forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past, thro' the Forbearance of GOD.

SUCH a Declaration, the Apostle well foresaw, would meet with various Oppositions and Objections, according to the different Prejudices, Humours, Customs, and Education of Mankind. And therefore he spends the greater Part of this Epistle in solving the Difficulties, that were, or might be raised against it, and in returning distinct Answers to his respective Opponents. But the Case of his Countrymen, the Jews, had in it something so singularly pitiable, that he was more than ordinarily solicitous to remove the Obstacles, which were in the Way to *their* Conversion.---For alas ! the Doctrine of the Gospel not only appeared to them under the *common* Disadvantages of being *new* and *strange*, and consequently different from what they had been always accustomed to, but likewise as *subversive* of ALL their boasted NATIONAL Privileges and Prerogatives. They had long
been

been accustomed to think themselves the sole Favourites of Heaven, and the peculiar People of God. No Nation beside themselves were worthy to participate of his Favours, or to be admitted to the more immediate Knowledge of the Divine Will. These were the *Honours* which they thought were always to *distinguish them* from the Mass of Mankind. But the Gospel was set up to oppose these fond Pretensions, and to take away every Distinction between Jew and Gentile. For there is no Difference: the same LORD over all, being rich unto all that call upon him. Nay more, the Jews were threatened, if they continued obstinate in their Unbelief, if they would go about to establish their own Righteousness, instead of accepting that Method of Justification which God had ordained;---the Jews were threatened, I say, that they should be rejected and cut off, notwithstanding all their Prerogatives, notwithstanding they were the *Israelites*, to whom pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the Giving of the Law, the Services of God, and the Promises: And they were further told, that thro' their Fall Salvation would be brought unto the Gentiles; for the natural Branches would be broken off, and the wild ones be grafted in, to partake of the Root and Fatness of the Olive Tree.

How

How mortifying a Consideration must this be to a People wholly wedded to an extravagant Opinion of themselves! And how strongly must all their former Prejudices have been heightened on this Occasion, to indispose their Minds from listening to any Proposals of the Gospel!—The Apostle seems to be extremely sensible of the unhappy Bias they lay under, and expresses the deepest Concern on that Account. He tells them, that the Rejection of the Jews from being any longer the Church and People of God, is a Subject he would not have touched upon, did not Truth, and a deep Concern for their own eternal Happiness extort it from him. He begins this 9th Chapter with a solemn Protestation of the great Love he bore them, and of the Affliction he suffered on Account of their continued Obstinacy and Unbelief. *I say the Truth in Christ, says he, I lie not, my Conscience also bearing me Witness, in the Holy Ghost, that I have great Heaviness and continual Sorrow in my Heart. For I could wish, that myself were accursed from Christ for my Brethren, my Kinsmen, according to the Flesh; that is, I could wish, that I was made a public Victim, or expiatory Sacrifice, to appease the Wrath of CHRIST, so that he might not reject my Brethren, my Kinsmen according to the Flesh.* The Apostle did not mean that he wished himself to be *accursed* FROM CHRIST, as our Translation

lation has erroneously rendered it : But he says, he would have been content to have devoted himself to Death, as a voluntary Offering, if by that Means he could have prevented the Ruin and Rejection of his Countrymen. This was a Way of speaking well understood both by Jews and Gentiles in those Times; and signified the highest Degree of Patriotism, or public Spirit; namely, so far as for any one to offer to lay down his Life, to devote himself to Death, to avert any public Judgment or Calamity.

HAVING thus therefore expressed his ardent Zeal for their Happiness, he takes Occasion to recount the many glorious Privileges they were formerly endowed with : Such as the Right of *Adoption, the Glory, the Covenants, the Giving of the Law, the Service of God, and the Promises* : And closes the illustrious Catalogue with the Sum total and Substance of all, viz. *And of whom concerning the Flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.*—All this seems to be introduced in order to put them upon reflecting on their melancholy Situation, and the Greatness of their Downfal, if they continued still to spurn at the Method of Salvation, now proposed to their Acceptance.

BUT here again he foresaw another Objection ready to arise : For to this the Jews would be apt to reply, That they *could* not be cast off, because of the Promise made unto their Fathers.

But

But to this he answers, that Almighty God had already sufficiently fulfilled these Promises, or might take some other Method in the Course of his Providence for their Accomplishment, so that this could be no Bar against their present Rejection. Not, says he, *as tho' the Word of God had taken none Effect*; that is, it hath taken sufficient Effect to justify the divine Veracity in making the Promise of an everlasting Covenant to your Father ABRAHAM. *For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Neither because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all Children.* As if he had said, It is not the being a mere natural Descendent from ISRAEL, which constitutes a true *Israelite*, intended by this Covenant.—To be a true SON of ABRAHAM implies a great deal more than to be barely of the Seed of ABRAHAM.—This was designed to intimate to them (tho' in an indirect Manner for Fear of giving Offence) ^e that the *faithful* Gentiles were more properly the Seed of ABRAHAM than themselves. So that the Promise even thus, might receive its Completion.

AFTER that, he takes Occasion from the Consideration of the Nature of this Promise made unto their Fathers, to reason with them somewhat to the following Effect. If you, my Countrymen, will but attend to the *Nature* of that Covenant, and consider on what Terms it was *originally* founded, you, of all People, will have

have the least Reason to complain. For you should consider, that it was originally founded in the *mere* good Pleasure, and owing to the *sovereign Disposal* of Almighty God. The Promise was first made to *Abraham* freely, that his Posterity should be the Church and peculiar People of God, and enjoy the Land of *Canaan* for their Possession.—And *Abraham* was desirous that these Privileges should be fixed in the Line of *Ishmael*: But God denied his Request, and gave them to his Son *Isaac*.---Again, you have another remarkable Instance of the sovereign Will and Pleasure of Almighty God, in the Donation of such Kind of *national* Privileges, specified in the Case of *Esau* and *Jacob*. These two Children were both the Descendents of *Abraham*---of *Sarah*---and of *Isaac*; Persons to whom the Promise had been expressly limited: ---*Rebecca* was the Mother of them both, and consequently there could be no preference in that Respect. The Infants were yet unborn, neither of them having done *Good* or *Evil*: Yet it was predicted to *Rebecca*, *Two Nations are in thy Womb, and two manner of People shall be separated from thy bowels: And the one People shall be stronger than the other People, and the Elder shall serve the Younger.*

THUS was the Posterity of *Jacob*, tho' the younger Branch, *loved* and *preferred*, but that of *Esau* *hated*, that is, *slighted* in Comparison of the other,---not equally favoured and advanced.

AND now what shall we say to these things? *Is there unrighteousness with God?* God forbid.--- Consider again;---if it was no act of Injustice at first to choose you *preferably* to your elder Brethren the *Edomites*, to be *so long* his peculiar Church and People, what wrong can be done to you, if the Gentiles are now called in? And what reason have you of all People to complain, who are now rejected, not as the Posterity of *Esau* were thro' an act of *sovereign* Will and Pleasure, but on Account of your own *personal* Crimes and Infidelity?

NOR is it any Wrong done you, that even the IDOLATROUS Gentiles should now be preferred, and you cast out.---For when whole Nations have forfeited their Charter-Covenant by their Rebellion and Disobedience, surely Almighty God may forgive and receive which of them he pleases into his future Favour and Protection. Take an Example of this from your own History in the Matter of the Golden Calf, when God pardoned your national Revolt and Idolatry, saying unto *Moses*, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy, and I will have Compassion on whom I will have Compassion.*---So then in short, as to the great Point of *national* Privileges, the Sum is this: *It is not of him that willeth, because Abraham willed for Ishmael, and Isaac willed for Esau; nor of him that runneth; but of*
God

God that sheweth Mercy. These are acts of *mere Favour and Bounty*, which none can *challenge*, or have a *right* to expect, and consequently none can complain of Injustice, when the Preference is given to others.

AND as you have thus seen, how consonant it is to his *usual* Practice, that God should now extend his *Favours* to the *Gentiles*, I will in the next Place set forth how his *present Rejection* of you *Jews* is agreeable to his *known* Method of proceeding with respect to *Punishments*. For you know, *Pharaoh* had justly deserved to have been made an Example of God's Vengeance, *before* it was so *visibly* executed upon him. But yet the Scripture saith, *For this same purpose have I raised thee up*; that is, have I made thee to *stand*, preserving thee, and suspending to punish thee, when I sent all my other *Plagues*, *that I might shew my Power* (the more illustriously) *in thee*, and *that my Name might* (thereby) *be declared in all the World*. And thus it is as to the Rejection of you *Jews*. Almighty God might very justly have deprived your Nation of those Privileges, which ye were so unworthy of, long before ye had committed this last and finishing Act of Impiety, in crucifying the LORD of Glory, and despising the subsequent offers of his Pardon and Forgiveness through the Gospel. But in order to make a more *signal* Example of your Disobedience, he continued your State and

Nation in Being, that your Rejection, and the *call* of the *Gentiles*, might appear to all the World to be the *immediate Effect* of his *over-ruling Providence*. And thus he hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth; that is, he *sometimes* spares the Offenders, and remits these national Judgments, but at *other* Times, when they do not amend on these warnings, but grow more *incorrigible*, he gives them up to a *judicial Blindness*, *reserving* and continuing them in that Hardness of Heart, which they had before contracted, 'till such a Season as will be most proper for displaying his Judgments against them.

AND now having thus explained at large the Method of God's Providence, both in bestowing national Favours, and executing national Judgments, perhaps some of you may hence take Occasion to object, "If GOD hath determined to reject us from being any longer his Church and People, *why doth he yet find Fault?* Why is this Rejection laid to our Charge as a Crime, which he himself hath decreed to be done? If his Will be so, *who hath resisted it?*" Nay, but, O Man, *who art thou that repliest against God?* Will you reply, and charge the Fault upon him, which is absolutely in yourselves? Is not his Decree of rejecting you the *Consequence* of your own Impenitence and Unbelief? If his Will be at present to cast you off, it is, because you will not listen to the Propo-

fals

fals of Reconciliation which have been often made you. Nay, if it had so pleased the Divine Being, you might have been originally rejected, and the Gentiles have been preferred. And if it had been so, what could you have objected? *Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay of the same Lump, to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another to Dishonour?* Are not these national Privileges, Matters of mere Favour and Bounty, which therefore depend upon the *absolute* Pleasure and Appointment of God? just as it depends upon the Will of the Potter, what Use he shall fit his Vessel to, while it is on the Wheel, whether to a superior, or inferior End. But as for your Part, you have still less Reason to complain, if you are now cast off: For Almighty GOD, with Respect to you, is not only as a POTTER, who might at first have made you to be Vessels to Dishonour; that is, might have denied you these national Honours, but he is as a JUDGE, *who, willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much long suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted for Destruction*; that is, he will now execute those Judgments upon you, which you had *long deserved*, but were hitherto respited: And on the other Hand, *he will make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he*
 had

had before prepared unto Glory; even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles; that is, he will at last extend his Favours to the Gentiles as well as Jews, having prepared them by this Rejection of you, and other providential Circumstances, to listen to the Calls of his Gospel.

AND having thus at length gone through my first Attempt, which was to open and explain the Context, in order to have a better View of the Apostle's Aim and Intention in using this Similitude of the POTTER and the *Clay*, and of Vessels made of the *same Lump*, some to Honour and others to Dishonour.

II. I come now, in the second Place, to endeavour to set forth in *what Respects* a Parallel may be drawn between this Example of the Potter's Power over the Clay, and certain Dispensations of Providence towards Mankind.

I. Now, the Manner of GOD's disposing of *temporal* Blessings in such *various Subordinations* towards Countries and Nations, as we see they are, may very fitly be illustrated by this Comparison of the Potter and the Clay. For Almighty GOD disposeth of the Fate of Kingdoms and Empires as it seemeth him best. In this Respect he loveth JACOB, and hateth ESAU; that is, he putteth down one, and setteth up another. The fruitful Land of *Canaan* was allotted for the Inheritance of JACOB; whereas the

the Portion of ESAU was desert burning Sands, and barren Mountains: *The one People was stronger than the other; and the Elder did serve the Younger.* And if we look around us, we shall find, that all the Nations and Countries of the World are either JACOBS, or ESAUS in this Respect. The great Diversity of Soil, Climate, and Situation, and the different Figure both in Peace and War, which one Nation maketh in Comparifon of another, is a demonstrative Proof, *That the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

NOR is the Case of Individuals in the same Community less remarkable. For the Difference in this Respect, between one Man and another, is as great as that between Nation and Nation. Some are placed in high and elevated Stations, happy in the Goods both of *Body* and *Fortune*: Others are appointed to act their Part in an humbler Scene of Life; and perhaps may have also the Misfortune of an infirm Constitution, or some bodily Deformity to labour under. Some have neither Poverty, nor Riches, but are in the middle Way, at an equal Distance between the Vessels made to Honour, and those to Dishonour.---And with Respect to these Things, who can dispute the Potter's Right? or what Injustice is done to the Clay? For if Almighty GOD did not intend to make all Vessels alike, or for the like Uses, some must be *inferior*,
and

and others *superior* : But which of them those should be, that were to be formed for Honour, or Dishonour, must depend entirely upon the absolute Will and Pleasure of the great Disposer of all Things.

2. BUT the Parallel still holds good, and the same Argument is conclusive with Respect to the different Dispensations even of *divine Grace*, and of *spiritual* Light and Knowledge vouchsafed to different Ages and Countries. We do not, and we must not presume to fathom the great Depths of Providence in these Particulars. But this we know, that the *Divine Revelation* given to the Jews, was never in its own Nature designed to be universal : And that though the *Gospel*, as to its Plan and Tendency, *can* extend to all Nations and Countries, yet in Fact the Knowledge of it has extended but to few.---The like Observation may be made with Respect to *Natural Religion*, and the Powers and Light of Reason. For, not only particular Men, but whole Nations and Countries have been for several Ages past, and many are at this Day in the grossest Ignorance of the most important Points of moral Duties. What shall we say then ? And what Answer shall we return to these Things ?---Even the same that the Gospel furnishes us with :---*That where much is given, much is required : And that God accepteth according to what a Man hath, not according to what*

what he hath not. The Times of Ignorance are winked at, whether this be Ignorance of *natural*, or *revealed* Truths, provided it is not a *wilful* and *chosen* Ignorance of our own.---So that, in short, no Argument can be drawn from hence to impeach the Divine Justice, since it expects to reap only in proportion to the Seed it has sown.---But if, not satisfied with this, an insatiable Curiosity will still go farther, and demand a Reason,---Why were not all Nations made *equally* acquainted with the Divine Will?---Why was not the Light of Nature, and the Light of the Gospel communicated to ALL alike, in *equal* Purity and Perfection, with *equal* Clearness and Conviction?---Why were *higher* Dispensations vouchsafed to *some*, than to *others*?---The proper Answer to all such busy and useless Enquiries is, *Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay of the same Lump, to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another to Dishonour,*

INDEED there may be several wise Reasons in the Scheme of Providence for constituting Things in the Measure and Proportion that they are:---Reasons which perhaps will one Day be made manifest to us, and fill us with Wonder and Praise:---But are at present not proper for us to know, and therefore in Mercy concealed from us. But in the mean Time it is sufficient to stop our Mouths, that the great God hath ordered and decreed Things so to be.---*And who*

art thou, O Man, that repliest against God? Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?

AND as we have now been considering the Case of Ages and Countries, as favoured more, or less with the Means of Grace, and Knowledge of the Divine Will, what shall we say to that of Individuals of the same Age and Country?—*Hath not every Man among us his proper Gift of God, one after this Manner, and another after that?* How various are the Portions of Grace, and of Reason? How observable is the Difference between the *natural* Temper, the innate Passions, and Constitution of one Man, preferable to that of another? And what a great Variety is there to be found as to the *outward* Circumstances and Advantages in Life? Some are necessarily more exposed to Temptation, than others: Some are blessed with a better Education, a more exemplary Acquaintance, and sounder Instruction: Whilst others perhaps may be destitute of all these.—Yet let the Talents be few, or many, we shall only be called to an Account in proportion to what we have received. If the Obstacles in our Way were neither of our own putting, nor could be removed by our best Endeavours, the good God will make a suitable Allowance for the Failure of our Duty in those Respects. And in short, he, who received but the one Talent, shall not be condemned, because he received no more; but he shall be condemned,
and

and his Condemnation will be just, if he neglected to employ *that one Talent* in the *Measure* and *Degree* he might have done.

3. AND to conclude. This Similitude of the Potter and the Clay may serve well to illustrate the Divine Procedure in calling forth into Being such a beautiful and infinite Variety of Creatures one above another in the Scale of Life. From the mere Clod and Lump of Earth (which had the same Origin with the greatest, all Things having been at first created out of *nothing*) there is a Gradation to the Vegetable,—the Animal,—the Human,—and the Angelick Natures. And were we to survey each of these Classes of Beings in their Subdivisions, we should find as great a Variety among the Individuals belonging to them.—And as to all these Things, who can dispute the *Potter's* Right? Or what Injustice is done to the *Clay*? It can surely be no Wrong to me, that I am not created an *Angel*: Nor is it any Injury to the *Brute* that he is not made a *Man*. All Creatures were never intended to be of the highest Order. What just Reason therefore have I to complain, if other Beings are placed in an higher Order, or even if other Men of the same Order with myself are placed in a Rank and Station *above* me?—And why should any one repine, if Providence hath set him somewhat below me? Certain it is, that in these Distributions there can be no Wrong or Injury, if

the Happiness *over-balances* the Misery, or *might* over balance it, were it not his own Fault.

IN short, if it is a reasonable and wise Institution that there should be various Subordinations, Gradations, and Dependencies throughout the whole System of Being; if the glorious Attributes and Perfections of the Deity are thereby more effectually displayed; if the Beauty of the whole Frame of Nature is rendered more grand and august by such a rich Variety; and if the Foundation of relative and social Duties require such a Constitution in the moral World; then consequently some must be higher, and some lower in the Order and Scale of Things: *All* cannot be alike, where it is required there should be so great a Diversity: And if so, surely the mighty Potter, and not the passive Clay is to determine and adjust the Stations and Places each Vessel is to take. In short, Honour and Dishonour, like Poverty and Riches, are relative Terms, and only signify an Idea of Comparison. --- *Dishonour* is only less Honour, if compared with that which is greater.

AND thus I have endeavoured to shew in various Instances, where this Comparison of the Potter and the Clay is beautiful, just, and strong; where it serves to explain the Divine Conduct in an easy and intelligible Manner, and furnishes us with useful and just Reflections, when we contemplate the amazing Variety
which

which appears in the Dispensations of Providence towards Mankind.

III. I come now therefore to shew in what Sense, and in what Particulars the Parallel would fail; and therefore ought not to be attempted to be carried on farther: And then shall farther evince, that such an Interpretation would render these Words of Scripture very unprofitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and Instruction in Righteousness.

I. THE Similitude in my Text cannot justify the Notion that *Almighty God formed any of his Creatures with an Intent that they should finally be miserable*.---I say the Passage and the Context give no Countenance to Principles of this Cast. The Design and Scope of the Apostle, as was observed before, was only to shew, that Almighty God might dispense his *Favours* and *Gifts* in what *Proportion* he thought fit, without Impeachment of *Wrong* or *Injustice*. It hath appeared from the Explanation already given, that the Apostle was only treating of Matters of mere *Grace* and *Bounty*, not Matters of strict *Right* and *Justice*. If a Set of Creatures are called forth into Being, furnished with *Means* and *Capacities* sufficient to procure to themselves so *much Happiness*, as shall *over-balance* the Misery to which their State is necessarily subject, they have Reason to be *thankful* for this Communication of Good, be it *more* or *less*; and have no just Cause to complain, tho' others

others should receive still larger Portions from the Hand of God. This was all, which the Apostle intended to affirm, when he used the Similitude of the Potter and the Clay. And it seems to have been the farthest from his Thoughts to suggest those dangerous Tenets, which have been in After-ages deduced from his Expressions.

NAY, the very Metaphor, which he uses to illustrate his Argument, cannot in its own Nature be stretched so far, as to give Countenance to such Positions. For though the Potter exercises a Power over the Clay, when he pleases, to make Vessels of the same Lump, some to Honour, and others to Dishonour, that is, some to more *noble* Uses, and others to more *servile*; yet he never makes a Vessel with an Intent to subject it to Misery and Woe. Why then should we impute such a Design, as this, to the good and gracious God? The Context, we see, speaks no such Language; and the Holy Scriptures in general are very far from intimating, that he ever had any such Purpose, or Resolution: Nay, they expressly declare quite the contrary. They inform us, that so far from decreeing at the Time of Creation, some should be created with a View to be wretched, that he was from the Beginning, and is still using the *best, fittest, and wisest* Means to render all his Creatures, one as well as another, blessed and happy: And if any of them, thro' their own self-willed

self-willed Obstinacy and Perverseness, miss of these Joys, it will be greatly contrary to his Inclination and Desire.

THUS when ADAM was in Paradise, the good GOD was so far from projecting or intending his Fall, that he kindly cautioned him against the Danger of Disobedience.---And when Man by Transgression fell, he immediately comforted him by telling him of the Remedy he had prepared for his Reconciliation and Recovery;---even the Seed of the Woman, which was to bruise the Serpent's Head; that Seed in whom all the Nations of the Earth were to be blessed; and who, in the Fulness of Time, was to give his Life a Ransom for many; to taste Death for EVERY MAN. And, in Consequence of this first Promise, how gracious, yea how compassionate, is the Tenor of every Declaration which he made from Time to Time on this Head: *Have I any Pleasure at all that the Wicked should die? saith the Lord God:* And not that he should return from his Ways and live? *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways:* For why will ye die, O House of Israel?---Why will ye die, O Sons of ADAM? Seeing that GOD would have all Men to be saved, and is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance?

AND indeed what Reason or Motive could the great and good GOD be supposed to have for calling

calling any Creatures into Being to the Intent, that they should be *necessarily* miserable?---Where would be the *Glory* or *Honour* of such a Proceeding? To condemn them without allowing them a Trial, or putting them in a probationary State? It would indeed be a Display, and a most terrible one, of a *Wantonness* of Power and *tyrannical Sway*, exercised in the Gratification of a *mischievous* Disposition;---Attributes which belong not to a wise, just, and amiable Being: But it would be no Proof, no Indication of his Wisdom, his Goodness, and Truth; which are essential to the Divine Nature, and the highest Glory and Perfection of it.

2. NOR yet will the Words of my Text support the Notion, that our gracious LORD, and just Governor, expects *more* from his Creatures than he has given them a Power to perform, or is ready to give them, provided they make a *proper* Use of what they have already received. It cannot well be imagined, that the *Context* any Way tends to establish such a Principle. And as for the *Similitude* or Comparison itself, it is as distant from it as can possibly be conceived. For if the Potter makes any Vessel to *Dishonour*, if he intends that *this* Lump of Clay shall be fitted and adapted to a more *servile* Use than *that*, he expects no other Service from it than that, to which he has appointed it. He rests satisfied, that it answers the Uses for which he intended

it. And therefore if our Sovereign Creator hath formed any of us with various Proportions of Understanding ; if he hath placed us in different Stations and Circumstances of Life ; if he hath given different Abilities to different Persons ;—or if he hath vouchsafed more liberal Shares even of Divine Grace to some, than to others ; he only expecteth according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not.—It must, we will allow, be acknowledged to be a certain Truth, as I observed before, that the Dispensations of Almighty God are very different and various with Respect either to the *outward*, or *inward* Aids of Religion.—But suppose they are, the Vessel made to Dishonour will be treated accordingly : *No more* will be exacted from it, than it was made capable of performing : And if others were Vessels made to Honour, if much was entrusted to their Charge, of them shall the more be required.

3. To what has been said I shall add this one *general* Observation ; namely, that the Similitude of the Potter and the Clay, which is so proper to illustrate the *Power* of God in *creating* and *disposing* all Things according to his *sovereign* Will and Pleasure, is by no Means fit to be used in explaining the Rules of the Divine Government over the *moral* and *intellectual* World. The Character which the great

E

God

God sustains in this Respect, as the *just Judge*, and *impartial, moral* Governor of the Universe, has *no Affinity* with the Power the Potter exercises over the Clay.---Indeed before the Creation, or settling our future Condition in Life, we are as *Clay* in the Hands of the *Potter* :--- We belong to the NATURAL GOVERNMENT of GOD, wherein his *sovereign* and *almighty* Power displays itself in a wonderful and rich Variety of Gifts and Graces: But after the Donation is once made, and put under our Care to *cultivate* and *improve*, we are no longer as Clay in the Hands of the Potter, but we are *moral* Agents belonging, to the MORAL GOVERNMENT of GOD, wherein his *Justice* and *Mercy* do particularly preside. Thus you see there is a *natural* Government, and there is a *moral* Government, in the divine Oeconomy. Nor is it possible, that the same Similitude or Comparison could serve to illustrate the Scheme of *both* Governments: For their Laws are *different*, and relative to the Things they govern. In the *natural* World the great God acts irresistibly; and all *must* obey him by *necessary* and *mechanical* Laws: This is the Empire in which he shews us the *Immensify* of his Power in sustaining this wonderful Fabrick, and producing such a vast Variety of Creatures in their several Orders and Degrees.---But in the *moral* World he acts by Motives of Reason and Persuasion; and sets before Men the Consequences of their

OWN

own Conduct adjudged to them in Rewards, or Punishments: He impels none by *Force* or *Necessity*, but treats them as *free* and *moral* Agents, who are to give Account of their Actions. And by these Means, the righteous Judge causes us to behold the Uprightness of his Laws, and the Impartiality of his Government.---In short, whatever Inequalities there were in Creation, and in bestowing the several Talents according to the Will and Pleasure of the Donor, there will be none in the Rules of Judgment, and in the Distribution of Rewards or Punishments:---But every one will be dealt with according to his Desert; and he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, will be accepted of him.

AND thus I have endeavoured to set forth in what particular Cases the Parallel drawn in the Text would cease and fail, were it attempted to be carried on further. But suppose it possible, if you please, to *force* an Interpretation upon the Text, as if in Fact we had no more Liberty in any of our Actions than the Clay in the Hands of the Potter;—I would ask, to what Uses or Purposes of Religion and Virtue could it really serve? All the Holy Scriptures were given by Inspiration of God, and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and Instruction in Righteousness: But what would it avail me to be *taught*, that my Doom is determined for ever? What an *uncomfortable*

Doctrine is this to all those who have not yet received the Assurance that they are the particularly Elected?—And to those who are supposed to be elected it is needless and superfluous to inform them of it, as to any Purposes of *furthering* their Salvation by such Information.---In what Respect likewise would such an Exposition of the Text be profitable for REPROOF? If I do *well*, it is because the Potter puts me under a Necessity of doing well. And if I do *ill*, it is because he has decreed me to be a Vessel to Dishonour, and I can do no otherwise than ill. Nor can it better serve the Purposes of CORRECTION. For though I am corrected I cannot amend, unless the Potter has formed me to be a Vessel to Honour: And then there is no Need of Correction, because I must amend.---And if I am to be a Vessel to Dishonour, my Correction is my Reprobation. And what shall we say of *Instruction in Righteousness*? For to what End shall the Vessels appointed to Dishonour be instructed, if it is decreed and unalterably fixed, that *they* shall never be made capable of following such Instruction? And as to the Vessels appointed to Honour, they *must* go right by an Impulse from within, implanted in them by the Potter himself. Surely, therefore, they have no Need of the Instruction in Righteousness of the *outward* Word to guide them, who are so necessarily determined from *within*.

THUS

THUS therefore on the whole, in every View, and on which Side soever we turn ourselves, we see the most demonstrative and obvious Reasons to conclude, that the Words of the Text were never intended by the *Apostle*, and ought never to be applied by *us*, to countenance such Principles as *these* :---Principles subversive of the very Being of Christianity ;---representing the Deity himself as acting with the highest Insincerity and Equivocation : Namely, calling on his Creatures to obey his Commands, and severely punishing their Disobedience, when at the same Time he never intended to grant them the Power of obeying :---Is not this to represent the good God in a very injurious Light, as if he was not only *partial*, but exceedingly CRUEL ?--We are always taught, that it is our Duty, our Interest, and our Happiness to be like to God, and to imitate his divine Perfections, as near as we can.---But surely such a Conduct as this no good Man, no *honest* Man, would choose to imitate, but would detest and abhor. How then dare we ascribe that Conduct to him, the Source of all Justice and Truth, which is so unworthy of ourselves, and would be such a Disgrace to us?

IV. It remains therefore that I endeavour, from a View of all which has been said, to draw up some Inferences, and to conclude with some *practical* Deductions.

I. FROM

II. FROM a Review of the Explanation given of the Context under our first general Head, we may learn, how wrong it is to take up with the *Sound* of a Scripture Expression without consulting the Scope and Design of the Author. It is a grand Mistake to think, that a Principle or Doctrine is true, merely because it is *seemingly* countenanced by a Scripture Phrase. For if the Phrase is *misapplied*, it is not Scripture, though it be Scripture Words. And there is the more Reason for our utmost Caution in this Matter, both on Account of the Importance of the Subject, and of the Nature and Genius of the Style, in which the Holy Scriptures were written. The Word of God was designed to be a Light to our Feet, and a Lanthorn to our Paths: But if we take not due Heed to use it aright, it may dazzle and blind, rather than illumine and direct us. And then, alas! if the Light that is in us be Darkness, how great is that Darkness!—Moreover, as to the Nature and Genius of the *Scripture-Style*, we should ever bear in Mind, that the Eastern Nations are a People of great Vivacity and quick Apprehensions; that they conceive Things, and enter into the Spirit of what was intended to be said, without the Formality of a long Series of Propositions, and of producing each Argument in its full Length. They would have disdained, as heavy and spiritless, the methodical

rhodical Compositions of *our* Times and Climate. They delighted in bold figurative Expressions, and quick Sallies from one Subject to another.---And St. PAUL was remarkable for this oriental Cast and lively Imagination. For GOD, when he makes the Prophet, or the Apostle, doth not unmake the natural Temper and Disposition of the Man. This Vivacity therefore, both of Style and Imagination, is easily discernable in all his Writings. His Eloquence was strong and impetuous; his Apostrophes, or turning from one Subject to another, sudden and unexpected.---In this very Epistle to the Romans he often lays down the Premises, and only hints at the Conclusion; or gives us the Inference, with but just pointing at the Topick he took it from. In the second, third, and following Chapters, he carries on a Dialogue between himself and an unbelieving Jew, without giving any previous Notice of it.---In the seventh Chapter he personates the Character of an unregenerate Man describing his State of Mind at large; *The Good that I would, says he, I do not, but the Evil, which I would not, that I do.*---This has made some Persons weakly imagine, (because he did not tell them expressly, that he only personated *another* Man's Character) that he was describing *his own* State of Mind, and speaking of *himself*. But to mention no more, I have shewn in the Exposition of the Context, how often he answers

answers and solves the Objections, without formally stating them, as is the Manner with *us*.--- Nay he was distinguished for this Vivacity of Genius, and Suddenness of Thought, even in his own Times, and among his own Countrymen. For St. PETER hath observed that there were *many Things hard to be understood* in his Epistles:---Which doubtless was occasioned by his Writing in so concise and figurative a Style. For this naturally begets Obscurity, unless great Care and Attention are used to unravel the Subject.

AND, besides all this, there arises another Difficulty from the Turn and Idiom of the *Jewish* Language and Phraseology. For all Nations have some Peculiarities in their Phrase and Diction, which appear strange and uncouth to others. Thus, when two Sentences are placed in a *seeming* Opposition, they frequently imply only that one is to have the *Preference*, or that a *greater Stress* is to be laid on the one, than the other. When it is said, “ *I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice,*” Hosea vi. 6. it is not meant that Sacrifices were then to be *abolished*, (for that was not to be done ’till the Coming of CHRIST) but only that I require Mercies *rather* than Sacrifices:---And signifies the same as our LORD’s Reproof to the *Jews*, “ *Ye give Tithes of Mint, Annise and Cummin, and neglect the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Truth:* These

These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. It is said likewise, "*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*" The Propositions are not to be understood afunder, but to be taken together by Way of making a Comparison, namely, I have loved JACOB *more* than ESAU.—Nor is this meant with Respect to the *personal* Reprobation of ESAU in Reference to a future State, but only that the Descendants of JACOB, then represented by himself, should be favoured with some distinguishing Prerogatives, both spiritual and temporal, above the Descendants of ESAU: Wherein was verified the Prediction, that "*the Elder should serve the Younger.*" For we know ESAU did not serve his Brother JACOB: Nay his Brother JACOB did Obeisance to him.—Besides, the Word HATE in Scripture Language is not always to be understood rigorously: It often signifies no more than a less Degree of Affection. And thus, when our Saviour saith, that "*no Man can be his Disciple, unless he hateth his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, yea, and his own Life also:—*" He himself gives the true Exposition of it in another Place, that we may rightly understand his Meaning; namely, *He that loveth Father or Mother MORE than me, is not worthy of me.*

Now in all such Cases, the best general Rules of Explication are these: Let the Scope, Drift, and

F

Nature

Nature of the Argument be more attended to, than the bare Words or literal Expressions :--- And where a few single Passages seemingly contradict the general Design, let those be re-considered in Connection with the rest :--- Let us place ourselves in the Situation of those who heard the Speaker or Writer himself : And let us endeavour to find out, what were the Meaning of the Words at the *Time they were spoken* ; not what they may *now* imply at Times so far distant, and among People so very different in their Customs and Manners from the former. Moreover, in all Cases of Difficulty, let the plain Texts be the Interpreters of the obscure, not the obscure of the plain.

THESE, I say, are the best and most equitable Maxims to proceed on, and indeed are necessary for the Interpretation of all Writings, human or divine.

2. BUT from a View of what has been said under the second general Head, we may infer these two Things.

(1.) THAT, if Almighty GOD is the Sovereign Disposer of the several Ranks and Conditions in Life, as to *temporal* Things, we ought to be resigned and contented in our Station, whatever it be. We are not to choose for ourselves what Parts to act on the Stage of Life, but to act those well which are allotted, and appointed for us. It is a great Misfortune, that People so commonly

commonly amuse themselves with idle and imaginary Schemes, how they would behave, and what they would do, were they in such or such a Situation. They would be very good and very exemplary, were they very great, very learned, very wealthy, very retired, very old, and the like:--- But they neglect the Gift which is in them, and the Work which is appointed for them, while they are thinking of that which is not. Alas! their State of Probation is their *present* State, whatever it be. And when they are called to an Account before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST, it will be a poor Excuse to say, that their Thoughts were so taken up with Dreams and Reveries, how they would manage, were they in another Station, that they did not attend to the Discharge of those Duties which belonged to their own proper Calling.

(2.) FROM the same Principle we may infer, that if Almighty God hath greatly diversified the *spiritual* as well as the temporal Condition of Mankind, it is the Duty of each Individual to endeavour to improve his *own Talent* with Contentment and with Gratitude: For what is it to us, if some have less Difficulties, or larger Portions of Grace or Understanding than ourselves?--- We shall be answerable only in Proportion to what *we* have received. And if we do what is in our Power, the good God will not be wanting to aid and assist our sincere Endeavours.

If little is committed to our Trust, our Crime will consist not in having little, but in neglecting that little. And the Punishment will be inflicted on us, not because we did not perform *more* than our Strength, but because we performed *less*, and fell short of what we might have done.

3. MOREOVER, from the third general Head — we may observe, that good and pious Persons may be taught from hence to banish all gloomy and melancholy Apprehensions concerning the supposed Decrees of absolute Predestination. For it hath been clearly shewn, that the Case of the Potter and the Clay hath no Reference to such a Doctrine; and that the loving LORD hath made no Vessels unto Dishonour, in the Sense here meant, namely, of dooming Persons unconditionally, and without allowing them a Trial, to eternal Misery and Woe.

HENCE therefore we may observe, all Grounds of Despair are effectually taken away. The good GOD hath put no Bar in our Way to Heaven and Happiness. All is free and open provided we are not wanting to ourselves. And the great Author and Finisher of our Faith is continually calling to us in all his Dispensations, *Come unto me all ye that travel, and are heavy laden; and I will give you Rest.* And the Food of our Souls, the Body and Blood of CHRIST, is ready for every Man to partake of, that he may eat, and live for evermore.

4. To

4. To conclude, from hence also is shewn, that all Excuses and Pretences, all supposed Difficulties and Obstructions are frivolous and vain. If there is a Lion in the Way, it is one of our own placing. If we are tied and bound with the Chain of our Sins, it is our own Fault, for we have chained ourselves.---But even should this be the Case, let us still remember, that we may break their Bonds asunder, with the Assistance of Divine Grace, which is ever ready to strengthen those who earnestly and sincerely desire it.

AND to sum up all, let us not make *ourselves* to be Vessels to *Dishonour*; let us not be the Authors of our own Reprobation :---But, as we are all called to Faith and Repentance, and *elected* in the Gospel, *let us give all Diligence to make this Calling and Election SURE,*



S E R M O N II.

EPHES. ii. 9 and 10.

*By Grace ye are saved through Faith; and
that not of yourselves: It is the Gift of God:
Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.*

 HE principal Design of the Apostle in this Epistle is to teach his Converts at *Ephesus*, Jews as well as Gentiles, to comprehend the Nature of their common Salvation in JESUS CHRIST. The *Jews* had long been under a Dispensation *preparatory* to such an End--and as this *peculiar* Dispensation was now to cease, or rather to be absorbed in that *general* one, which was to follow, the *Gentiles* were invited to be *joint Partakers* with them. This is the *Scope of the Apostle's Argument*, through the whole first Chapter, and at the Beginning of the second. But as by *this* the *Nature* (or Foundation) of the common Salvation is not so much explained, as the Times of revealing, or communicating are ascertained (namely to the *Jews* first, and afterwards to the *Gentiles*); the Apostle in the Words of my Text shews, that this Salvation was founded on Grace,
not

not on Works: For neither Jew nor Gentile could claim it as a *Debt*, but must accept it merely as a *Favour*. Since “by Grace ye are saved through Faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the Gift of God: Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.”

THE Apostle here, you see, lays a great Stress upon this Point; insisting again and again, that Man's *Salvation* was a mere *free Gift* on the Part of God, not to be demanded as a *Debt*, or as what had become due *by Right*: For which Assertion he had both a *particular*, and a *general* Reason. His *particular* Reason was to convince the *Jews* and judaizing Christians, that since they themselves had no other Title to the Happiness of another Life, than *that* which was founded on Grace, and derived from Promises, the *Gentiles* might certainly have an *equal* Title, if God vouchsafed to grant them the like Grace, and make them the same Promises: And his *general* Reason was to prove to Jew, as well as Gentile, and in them to all Mankind, that they entirely owed their Hopes of Glory and of a blessed Immortality to the *Divine Favour*, manifested to the World in CHRIST JESUS, and not to any Performance of their own: That therefore neither Jew, nor Gentile, had any Thing to boast of in this Respect, being both of them alike unable to rescue themselves from Misery and Perdition, much less to acquire Happiness and Glory.

Now

Now this Doctrine, which sets all Mankind on a Level in Regard to any Hopes, which could be grounded on *their own* Performances, naturally tends in another Respect to exalt some in Preference to others. For if any are to be saved by Virtue of this System of Grace, then it follows, that they have wherewithal to glory, tho' not before God:---It follows also, that those, who do not find themselves in this salvable State, have great Reason to fear and tremble for the terrible and approaching Consequences. And so far all is just, and as it ought to be. For the Prospects of Happiness or Misery must necessarily occasion Joy or Sorrow in Proportion, as we are affected by a Sense of Guilt, or by a Consciousness of Integrity: And thus the *true Christian* is comforted in his Endeavours, and encouraged to proceed; while the *Sinner* is alarmed and terrified with the tremendous Expectation of eternal Perdition; a Perdition which most assuredly awaits him unless he turns to the LORD with true Repentance, and an unfeigned Belief in his Holy Gospel.

BUT nevertheless, this *Doctrine of Grace*, so essential to Christianity, when *properly* applied, and *rightly* understood, is on the contrary the most dangerous of *all* Doctrines, if once *mistaken* or *perverted*. For the presumptuous *Enthusiast*, or wild *Solifidian* (whose Belief is, that Faith alone, without Works, is effectual to Salvation)

Salvation) will argue thus, “ As my Salvation
 “ is of *Grace*, it is the *Gift of God*: And seeing
 “ it is *his Gift*, I have nothing to do but to em-
 “ brace it thro’ *Faith*; which *Faith* is likewise
 “ the *Gift of God*. As *all* therefore comes from
 “ *him*, and *nothing* from *myself*, my Salvation is
 “ most certain, because it rests upon *his Promises*,
 “ which are *infallible*. I FEEL this heavenly
 “ Gift now *within* me: I acknowledge its sove-
 “ reign Power, and God forbid I should boast
 “ of any Thing else. *Works* therefore are ex-
 “ cluded, not only as unnecessary and useless,
 “ but as dangerous, and derogatory from my
 “ Saviour’s Merits, and tending to introduce
 “ that Self-boasting, which ought to be re-
 “ nounced.”

ON the *other* Hand, the Man of a gloomy and
 desponding Temper will wrest the same Passage
 of Holy Scripture to his own Destruction, after
 this Manner, “ If God hath not determined to
 “ save me, all that I can do, will be of no Avail.
 “ His Gift is not yet bestowed on me. I feel
 “ no such Faith, as is here described: And ’till
 “ I do, I must consider myself as a lost Man.
 “ My own Endeavours, I find, are altogether
 “ unprofitable. They cannot save me; while
 “ he alone, who can save me, will not do it.”

THUS these two Sorts of Men distort the Scrip-
 tures by quite contrary Methods, and make
 them speak two Languages as opposite to Truth

as they are to each other. There is something in the Opinion on either Side, which is really true; but this Truth is so disguised with a Mixture of Error, and so blended with Falsehood, that it is not an easy Matter for common Christians to *separate* the Gold from the Dross; and bad indeed are the Consequences, when there is *no Separation* made.

PERMIT me therefore to attempt this necessary Distinction. And as the Doctrine of the Text is one of the most important in the whole System of Christianity, let us endeavour, by the Blessing of God, to place it in such a Light, as shall discover its native Excellence, at the same Time that it lays open those dark Mazes of Error, which too often have bewildered Men in searching after it.

BE it then observed, in the first Place, that the English Translation is here a little ambiguous.---“ By Grace ye are saved thro’ Faith; “ and that not of yourselves: It is the Gift of “ GOD.” Hence many People have unhappily concluded, that, according to the Assertion of the Text, *Faith* is the *Gift* of GOD.---A *Gift*, I mean, in some peculiar Sense; such a Gift as is not vouchsafed to Mankind in general, like the Gift of Reason, or any other common Blessing; but is appropriated only to the select few who are thereby enabled to lay hold on CHRIST, while all the rest of their Brethren are necessarily
lost.

lost for Want of it. Now this is a very great Mistake; for the Scriptures contain no such Assertion: And the Words of the Text in particular say nothing about any Kind of Faith, as a *Gift* of GOD, but refer wholly to another Matter. The Assertion of the Apostle is plainly this, “*that SALVATION BY GRACE is the GIFT of God; that it is not of ourselves, or to be derived from any Works of ours, lest any Man should boast.*” This is the *Substance* of the Doctrine; and the original Greek, καὶ τὸ [τὸ ἐργασίον] can signify nothing else. But as to *Faith*, THAT is mentioned only as the *Means*, or an *Instrument* of obtaining the *Salvation* here declared. Nay farther, the Apostle proceeds in the following Verses to *explain* this Doctrine of a *gratuitous* Salvation, by likening it to a *Creation* in the *natural* World, namely, “For we are *his* Workmanship, CREATED in CHRIST JESUS unto “good Works.”

HERE then let us take the Advantage of this Similitude of a *Creation* in the *natural* World, of which the Scriptures themselves have put us in Possession, in order to illustrate the Nature of the *spiritual* Creation, or that *gratuitous* Salvation, which is obtained for us in CHRIST JESUS.

Now it is certain, that the *Bringing* of Mankind first into Being, called *Creation*, is the *Gift* of GOD; it is likewise equally certain, that the

Continuance of them, and supporting them in Being, otherwise termed *Preservation*, is also his Gift. And yet these *two* Gifts are of *very different Natures*, and should always be considered in very different Points of View.

Thus for Example, it might justly be said in Regard to *Creation*, (and ought indeed always to be acknowledged) that the *Bringing* us into Being was an Act of mere Grace and Favour; not owing to any Thing in ourselves, but to the Kindness and free Gift of God; not of *Works*, lest any Man should boast. Therefore, whether we are naturally strong or weak, whether we are beautiful or otherwise, whether tall or short, and whether we have such or such Endowments, or have them not, *all, all* must be referred to the good Pleasure of God; because *he alone* dispenseth the Variety of Gifts according to his sovereign Will; and is not to be called to an Account, or interrogated why he has done *this*? or why he has *not* done *that*?—In short, it is in this Sense certainly true, that *all Nature* is only “*as Clay in the Hands of the Potter. Has he not therefore Power of the same Lump to make Vessels for various Uses, some to Honour, and others to Dishonour?*” (Rom. ix. 21.) Undoubtedly he has; and in the Exercise of such a Power no Wrong or Injustice is done to *any*, because none can have a *Right* to demand more than the Donor is pleased to bestow.

Moreover

Moreover in this Sense it is certainly true, that as no one has any just Cause to *complain*, so no Man has any Right to *boast*. For if you differ from another on Account of any superior Endowment, *Who made you to differ?* and *what hast thou that thou didst not receive?* Now if thou didst receive it, *why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* (1 Cor. iv. 7.)

THUS stands the Case in Regard to *Creation*.—And as it is necessary that Mankind should *know*, and be continually *reminded* of these Things, such a *Knowledge* may be termed *Faith*—a Faith in God, as the Maker and Creator of the World. And this Faith is as necessary to Man, in order to have right Notions of God his Creator, as the Faith in CHRIST the Redeemer is necessary for the Purposes of Justification and Salvation.

PROCEED we therefore to the Consideration of the *other* Gift of God, subsequent to *Creation*, namely *Preservation*.—And who can doubt but *this* likewise is his heavenly *Gift*? For what is there in the Food we eat, or in the Air we breathe, or in the Raiment we put on, that could support our Lives, even for a Moment, without the Concurrence and Efficacy of *Divine Power*? And where should we be, were the Hand to withdraw itself, which now sustains us, (*though invisible*) which ever did, and ever must sustain us, through all the Periods of our Existence?

istence? Yet this *latter* Gift of *Preservation*, as real as the *former*, and as great an Instance of Divine Power as *Creation*, is nevertheless of a very different Nature, and requires to be considered in a distinct and separate View.---For in regard to *Preservation*, Man is to *concur*: He is to *co-operate* with the System of Providence, established in the World---and our own Endeavours must never be wanting. In regard to *this*, one Man really makes himself to differ from another; because Life may be either prolonged or shortened, preserved or destroyed, according as the good Things of Providence are *used* or *abused* in their Application.---In Truth the former Gift (namely *Creation*) was wholly *absolute* and *unconditional*---but this *other* (namely *Preservation*) is *relative*, and has so many *Conditions* annexed to it, as there are Things to be *done* for supporting Life, and rendering it easy and comfortable according to our respective Stations.

JUST so it is in Affairs of Religion:---*Salvation by Grace* (or the System of our Redemption) is the Gift of God. It is not of *ourselves*; it is not of *Works*, (and for the very same Reason also it is not of *Faith*) lest any Man should *boast*: But it is altogether *free* and *unconditional*, totally independent of every Consideration, except that alone which gave Existence to it, the Love of God, and his Compassion for a ruined World.

World. *This Gift* is therefore *absolute* and *universal*, made for the Use of *all*, and offered to *all alike* --but how we *use*, or how we *apply* it is quite a different Thing. For whether we accept, or neglect so great a Salvation, is a Point which must at last depend on *ourselves*; and every Precept of the Gospel becomes in this Sense a *Condition* of Salvation.

To conclude, the Progress of the whole Affair is briefly thus. We are first to *believe* that we are saved *by Grace*; that is to say, that the *System of our Salvation*, like that of our *Creation*, are both *free Gifts*, not of *ourselves*, not of *Works*, but the *free Gift* of God, lest any Man should *boast*: And having laid this *Foundation* for our Hopes to be built on, we are in the next Place to *co-operate*, or "to *work together* with God, *that his Grace may not be in vain.*" Our *spiritual*, like our *natural* Life, is to be preserved by the Use of proper *Means*.---And if we do not exert *our own* Endeavours, we are no more to expect to be *saved* by a Miracle, than to be *fed* by a Miracle.

HERE then lies the *Stress* of the whole: Do we *co-operate* (or *work together*) with God? and are we *using* such *Means*, as are necessary for the *Preservation* and *Growth* of our *spiritual* Life? These are Questions which every Man ought to put to his own *Conscience*; because they are *Inquiries* which will certainly be made at the awful

Day

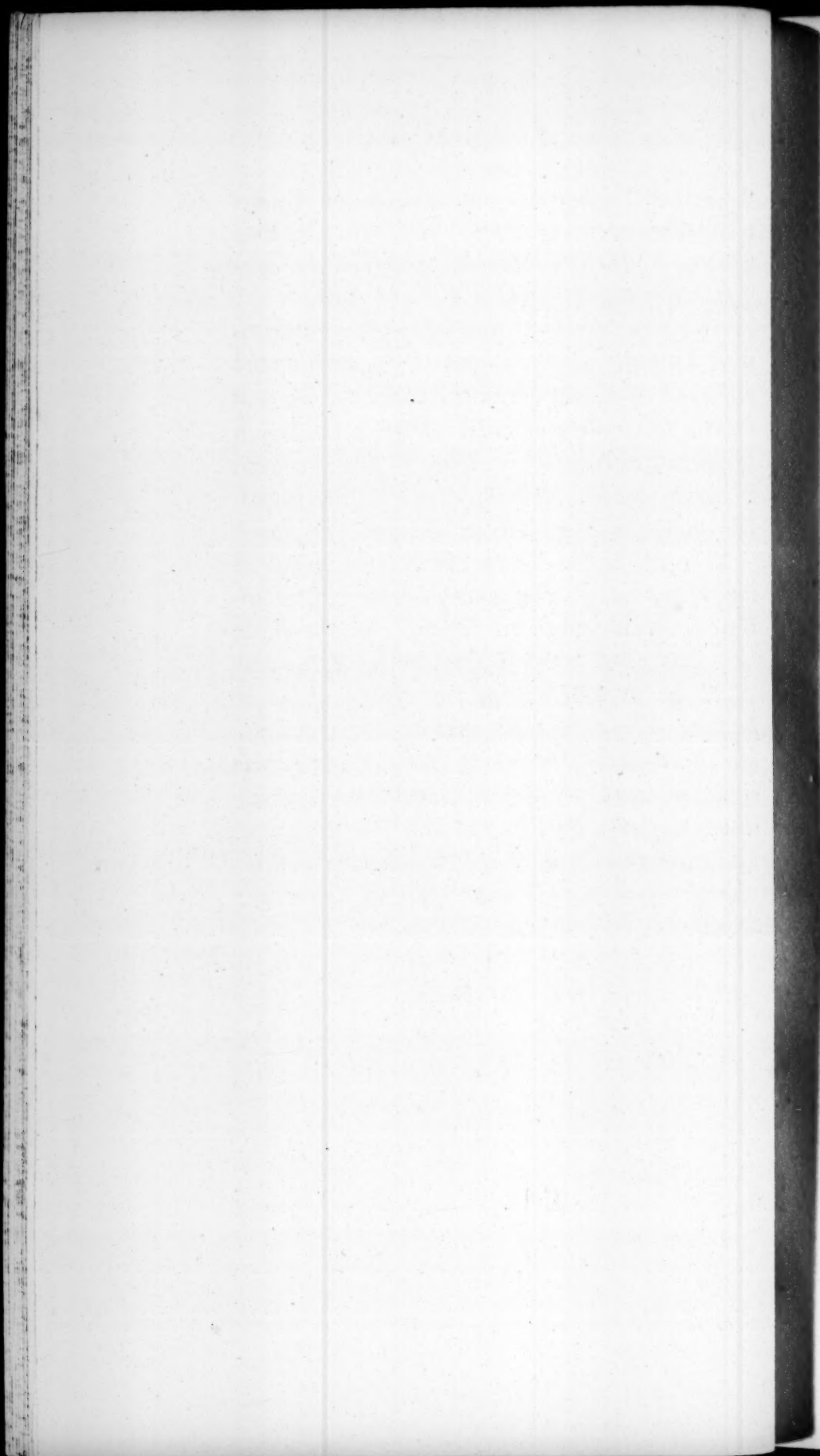
Day of Judgment: And if his *Conscience* cannot return a satisfactory Answer *now*, think what must be the Consequence *hereafter*, where no Excuses can avail, where no Plea, which is not just and true, will be admitted.

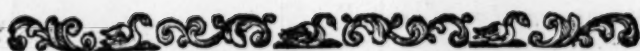
In short, it is an undoubted *Fact*, that the *Christian* Dispensation is a Dispensation of ten Talents, absolutely and freely given: But, permit me to ask, Is it likewise an undoubted Fact that every Man, who has *received* this Gift, has made a proper *Use* of it? And are there no alarming Queries, no Misgivings on this Head? ---Let the presumptuous *Enthusiast* and wild *Solifidian* (whose Tenet is, that good Works are not requisite to Salvation) duly and timely consider this: Let the *nominal* Christian lay the same deeply to Heart: And indeed let us *all* reflect, that the *more* we have entrusted to our Care and Management, the *greater* ought our *Improvement* to be. As to the poor desponding Soul, him, who is terrified by the painful and oppressive Thought, that there is no Provision made for him in the *general* Plan of Salvation, let him be *assured*, that every Apprehension of this Nature is happily without Foundation -Let him be satisfied, that there is a *Salvation by Grace*, the Gift of God, ready and prepared for him: And that, if he will sincerely use *his own* Endeavours, and will earnestly *pray* to God for further Strength, he cannot fail of obtaining the Happiness intended

tended, the Happiness *purchased* for him by his compassionate Redeemer.---Wherefore let him rejoice in this Consolation, "*let him be comforted by these Words.*"

AND NOW, my Brethren, what will you *say* to these Things?—Do you want a Religion founded in *Love*? You have it in the Gospel.—Do you seek for a Religion grounded on *Wisdom*, a Religion so formed as to be every Way suitable to Man in his present State? You have it in the Gospel. Do you therefore wish to be *good, and to be happy*? ---You may be so. There are no *Impediments* in the Way, except you yourself have laid them. Remove these, and all will be safe.—On the whole God has done every Thing on *his* Part, that could be expected from the *wisest* and *best* of Beings. It now remains, that we discharge *ours*: And then our *Wisdom here*, and our *Happiness hereafter*, our Duty and our Interest must consist in the vigorous Exertion of our Faculties, and the animating Reflection, that we are *Fellow-workers with God* through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now, and for evermore.





S E R M O N III.

LUKE xvii. 10.

*When ye shall have done all those Things,
which are commanded you, say, we are
unprofitable Servants.*



ANY Passages in Scripture seem to *contradict* this Assertion of the Text, by ascribing such a *Dignity* to Virtue, and such a *Worthiness* to Obedience, as plainly shew, that the good Man, in Consequence of his Goodness, is rendered more acceptable to the Divine Being, than he otherwise would have been.—And whereas in this Text CHRIST tells us, that “when we have done all, we are still but *unprofitable Servants**;” there is another, which declares, that “Godliness is profitable for all Things; having the Promise of “the Life, which now is, as well as that which “is to come.” (1 Tim. iv. 8.)—To the same Purport is the following Passage, “He, that

* Δουλοι ἀχρεῖς, *useless Servant.*

“loveth

“loveth Father and Mother more than *me*, is
 “*not worthy* of me:” (Matth. x. 37.) Where
 our Saviour strongly intimates, that those who
 love GOD as they ought, and their Fellow-Crea-
 tures in a proper Subordination, are really *wor-*
thy of him; and of this Sort of Persons he says
 in another Place, “They are accounted *worthy*
 “to obtain the World, which is to come.”
 (Luke xx. 35.)---“*Watch therefore*, adds he in
 “the following Chapter, *and pray always, that*
 “*ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the*
 “*Son of Man.*” (Luke xxi. 36.) That is, in the
 Day of Judgment. The Language of St. PAUL
 is likewise to the same Effect in many of his
 Epistles. He exhorts the Ephesians to “walk
 “*worthy* of the Vocation wherewith they were
 “called.” (Eph. iv. 1.)--He prays earnestly for
 the Colossians, that “they may walk *worthy* of
 “the LORD, unto all pleasing.” (Coloss. i. 10.)
 And he tells the Theſſalonians, that they knew
 how he had “exhorted and comforted, and
 “charged every one of them, when he preached
 “among them (as a Father doth his Children)
 “that they should walk *worthy* of GOD.”
 (1 Theſſ. ii. 12.)---And laſtly, St. JOHN in his
 Revelations ſcruples not to aſſert that there were
 “*a few Names*” ſtill left “*in*” the Church of
 “*Sardis*,” notwithstanding the general Deſection,
 “*who not having defiled their Garments ſhall*” be
 recompended by “*walking*” with the Lamb “*in*

“*white : For they are worthy.*” Thus it appears, that there is a *Worth* in Virtue and Obedience, and consequently a Profitableness in the Practice of it: There is therefore a Sense, in which it is not only lawful, not only expedient, but even necessary to maintain, that good Works are *worthy*; nay more, that they are *worthy* not only before *Men*, but likewise in the Sight of *God*. For the *general* Tenor of the Texts now quoted, and of many more, sufficiently *proves*, that there is a strict and necessary Connection between Virtue and Happiness, between Duty and Retribution.

BUT *how* is this reconcileable with the Doctrine of my Text, that “all our Works are *unprofitable*?” And how indeed shall we ascribe a *Worth* to human Performances, and yet deny that they are *deserving* or *meritorious*?---Some have thought to avoid this Difficulty by asserting, that the *Unprofitableness* of our Works is owing to their *Imperfections*, and that the *Want of Merit* in good Works arises from the Want of their exact Conformity to the *perfect* Law of God. This is the Sentiment of the Author of the Homilies of our Church, who says “that all the good Works we can do be imperfect, and therefore not able to deserve our Justification.”---The plain Inference from which is, “that if they were not imperfect, they would really be deserving.”---Consequently that the Obedience

Obedience of Angels doing the Will of God in Heaven, without any Mixture of human Frailties, being a *perfect* Obedience, is strictly and literally a *meritorious* one. Whereas the Words of my Text certainly ascribe the Unprofitableness of our Services to some *other Cause*, than that of mere *Imperfection*. For “when ye shall have done *all* those Things that are commanded you, say we are *unprofitable* Servants--we have done that which was our Duty to do.”---And truly were our Obedience even as *complete* as that of the Angels in Heaven, it would seem a strange Assertion to say, that the Happiness we enjoyed, was what we had actually purchased; and that we had given an Equivalent to the Almighty by bartering a Quantum of our Virtues, in Exchange for his heavenly Pleasures,---Pleasures which last for evermore.

You see here a Case thoroughly embarrassed. On *one* Side a great and necessary *Worthiness* is ascribed to Virtue, and even to such *imperfect* Virtue as is within the Compass of frail human Agents to perform :---On the *other* Side a total Renunciation of all Profitableness resulting from it, were it much *more perfect* than it is :---Nay, were it so very perfect and extensive as to comprehend all, which had been commanded us to do. What then shall we *say* to these Things?--The Members of the Church of *Rome*, by considering the innate Excellence of moral Virtue, and
by

by considering nothing else, have attributed such a Degree of Merit to human Actions, as is quite incompatible with the Notion of receiving any *free Gift, Favour, or Bounty* from the Hands of God.---And to *their* Side of the Question the modern Unbelievers have chiefly adhered---who, in order to supersede the Use, or Expediency of a Saviour and Redeemer, have represented the Deity himself as under a Kind of *Necessity* of rewarding the poor Services of Mankind with the greatest Happiness he had in his Power to bestow. On the *other* Hand, many of our first Reformers, shocked with these extravagant Positions and presumptuous Demands, spoke of Man's Obedience, and personal Holiness in such degrading and incautious Terms, as induced others to conclude, that they were of *no Use* at all: And therefore the natural Inference was, that seeing they were in no Sense profitable, they might as well be omitted, as performed.---Nay, *some* there *were*, and, it is to be feared, still *are*, who have gone so far, as to maintain, that all Endeavours towards recommending ourselves to the Divine Favour by any Performances of our own, were *so many* ungrateful Attempts to set aside the Merits of CHRIST, or at least to set up our own Merits, as Co-partners with his in the Attainment of our Salvation.

Now, as *contradictory* as these several *Opinions* are, the *Scriptures themselves* are not contradictory;

dictory ; but will be found not only consistent with each other, but to contain the most just, as well as the most clear Notions, that the Mind of Man can conceive of these Things. And if the proper and easy Solution of the present Difficulties has been long overlooked, it is not the *Scriptures* which are to blame, but the Inconsiderateness, the Prejudices, and Prepossessions of Mankind. For while we are searching about, and going a great Way off for far-fetched Solutions, we omit those, which are the nearest at Hand, the most obvious, and most necessary to be known.

My Text for Example refers us to the Case of Servants *profitable*, or *unprofitable* in their Master's Service.---And surely we could not have a more familiar Illustration of the Subject, than this before us.--What therefore have we to do but to consider what it is, which denominates a *Servant* to be profitable or useful in the Business about which he is employed---and then to apply the same Idea to the Nature of *our* Services in regard to *God*. Now all *earthly Masters* want the Assistance of their Servants in one Degree or other; and the better the Servants perform what is commanded them, the more Profit they bring to their respective Employers.---With this View the Husbandman hires Labourers to till his Ground: The Artisan and Mechanic are desirous of getting the most skilful and industrious
into

into their Shops and Families.---Profit, you see, Profit, and Advantage to *themselves* are their chief Aim; and Self-Interest their ruling Motive.---But can this be the Case in regard to God?---Does *he* want any of our Services in the same Sense, and that for the same Reason, that a *Master on Earth* is desirous of having the Help and Labour of his Fellow-Mortals? Surely no! And whether we chuse or refuse his Service, his Work will nevertheless be performed in his Empire of Nature equally well, with equal Expedition, and with equal Success.

BUT farther---Not only a *private Master*, but likewise a *Prince*, or *public Magistrate* may receive signal Advantages from the good Services of those, over whom they preside. The *Prince* cannot carry on the Affairs either of Peace or War, without the Assistance of his *Subjects*; and the *Magistrate*, who is not to bear the Sword in vain, must nevertheless have *others* to strengthen his Hands in the Execution of his Office---otherwise Evil-doers will be a Terror to *him*, instead of his being so to *them*.---Now here again---tho' we should do our utmost, we are still *unprofitable, useless* Subjects.---We add nothing to the Strength of the *Almighty*; nor do we render him more secure on his Throne, more formidable to his Enemies, or more able to reward his faithful Adherents and lawful Subjects, than he was before.---Nay, tho' *all* the Sons of ADAM should
I rebel,

rebel, or deny him his just Tribute, he is not the *weaker* by their Defection, not the *poorer* by what they withhold from him. For in short, his Happiness is not *at all* affected by any Thing the *best* can do to serve him, or the *worst* to disoblige him. In *this* Sense, therefore, it is certainly true, that there can be *no Merit* in the Performances either of Men, or of Angels. There can be *none*, I say, because no Profit or Advantage can possibly arise to the Supreme Being by any Thing, which the most perfect of his Creatures can intend or accomplish.

BUT yet there is *another* View, in which these Things are to be considered; and that is, in Relation to the *moral* Government of God. Now in *this* Particular the Government of God is different from that of all other Rulers; because it is instituted wholly for the Good of the *Governed*, and not in any Degree for the Profit or Advantage, the Strength or Security of the *Governor*. He therefore (as was *before* observed) being *complete in himself*, and wanting nothing, has promulged Laws to his reasonable Creatures solely for the Sake of promoting their Benefit and Advantage. And, as his Design in so doing was to communicate Happiness to his Creatures in the most fit and proper Way for them to receive it, surely he is better pleased when they *co-operate* with his gracious Designs, than when they *counter-act* them. And therefore, tho' the Good
and

and the *Bad* are equally *unprofitable*, as far as his own *private* Interest is concerned, (if I may so speak) yet certainly they are not equally *unacceptable* in his Sight. Nor can it otherwise be, but that the *good* Man should always meet with the *Approbation* of God.

HERE then is the Point on which the whole Matter rests.---The *good* Man has *no Merit* towards God, because he can never *profit* or *assist* the ALMIGHTY; yet nevertheless he is the fitter Object of the Divine Favour, in Proportion to his greater Virtue and Obedience. And, tho' he can give nothing to God by Way of Equivalent, or Exchange, yet if he will "*patiently continue in well-doing, he shall certainly receive Glory, Honour, and Immortality,*" for his Reward. There is therefore a *Dignity* in Virtue, a *Worth and Excellence* in Goodness, though not properly a *Merit*; and if so, there can be no Impropriety in maintaining "that our good Works are profitable;" provided we mean, that they are profitable *only to ourselves*. This being the Case, I think it must be allowed, that all Difficulties on this Head are entirely removed; and that the different Passages of Holy Scripture are found to harmonize perfectly with each other, and to agree in speaking the Words of Truth and Soberness. "Walk therefore, I beseech you, *worthy* the Vocation wherewith ye are called:" For "*Godliness is certainly profit-*

“able as to the Concerns of *this* World, as well “as of *that* which is to come.” And though it cannot *purchase* Heaven for us, though it neither has, nor pretends to have, the *Merits of a Saviour and Redeemer*, yet it fits and prepares us to partake of the Benefits of our Saviour’s Merits, and qualifies us to relish, and long for the Pleasures which last for evermore.

MOREOVER, be it ever remembered with Gratitude and Praise, that our gracious LORD has not only purchased “an eternal Weight of “Glory” for those who continually *obey*, but has likewise obtained the Grant of *Forgiveness* to the penitent Offender; and what is still more, a Re-establishment of his Claim to endless Bliss and Glory; so that none, even among the worst of them, can say, that they wanted due Encouragement or Incitement to repent and live.---Indeed “to be steadfast, im-
“moveable, and always abounding in the “Work of the Lord,” is certainly the best, because it is the surest; because likewise we have it not in our Power to repent when we please; and because also the greater the Progress in Virtue, the greater will be the Reward of the virtuous at the Day of Retribution. But nevertheless, through the Mercies of the Christian Covenant, as *all* are forgiven on their hearty and sincere *Repentance*, so *all* will be rewarded in some Degree or other; and the Labours of *none* will be in vain in the LORD.

LET

LET not therefore any Notions prevail, which tend to discourage, or turn you aside from the Practice of good Works; and never think of exalting your Saviour's Merits by such Methods, as in fact will absolutely frustrate all the *Intents and Benefits* of his Merits; "will crucify him afresh, and put him to an open Shame." On the contrary, while you acknowledge with humble Gratitude and unfeigned Joy, that "*eternal Life is the Gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord,*" strive earnestly to obtain this best of Gifts, in the Way and Manner *he* has appointed. "Strive to make your Calling and Election sure."---And, while you freely confess, that your very best Services are unprofitable with Regard to God, study by all Means to render them as profitable as you can to your Neighbours and to yourselves. Thus you will act the consistent, the pious, the charitable, and the Christian Part. Thus you will render to all their Dues; Humility to God the Father; Gratitude and Love to his eternal Son, your only Redeemer; and Obedience to the Dictates and Suggestions of the Holy Spirit, your Comforter and your Sanctifier.

MOREOVER thus you will display not only a sound and orthodox Faith, but also exhibit the *Pattern* of a good Life, and exemplary Conversation. You will not only consult the Welfare and Happiness of *your own* immortal Souls, but promote

promote also the Salvation of *others*, and the *Good* of Mankind. Therefore, my beloved Brethren, let it be your joint Petition to the Throne of Grace, in regard to “whatsoever
 “ Things are true, are honest, are just, are pure,
 “ are lovely, and of good Report : If there be
 “ any Virtue in them, if there be any Praise re-
 “ sulting from them, that we may think on, may
 “ attend to, and practise these Things.” “ Phil.
 “ iv. 8. *For if these Things be in us, and abound,*
 “ *they will make us, that we shall neither be barren,*
 “ *nor unfruitful, in the Knowledge of our Lord*
 “ *and Saviour Jesus Christ :*” (2 Pet. i. 8.)

*To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit,
 be ascribed all Praise, Might, Majesty, and
 Dominion, for ever and ever.*



S E R M O N IV.

I JOHN iii. 7 and 8.

Let no Man deceive you: He, that doeth Righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous:---He, that committeth Sin, is of the Devil.

BY the Manner in which these Words were introduced we plainly perceive, that they were intended as a *Guard* (or *Caution*) against some *pestilential Doctrine*. And the History of those Times expressly tells us what the Doctrine was, namely, “*that Faith and Practice need not go together,*” “*as a Person might be an acceptable Christian*” “*without being a good moral Man; provided*” “*he understood the important Secret (discovered*” “*by the Sect, who called themselves Gnosticks,*” “*that is, the knowing ones)* of considering “*Christianity as a Matter of ingenious Speculation,*” “*and not as a Rule of Duty.*”

Now, in Answer to this Conceit *so very weak,* but at the same Time *so extremely dangerous,* the Apostle uses the Words of my Text with a peculiar

culiar Propriety, and an emphatic Indignation: "Let no Man *deceive* you: He, who doeth "Righteousness, is righteous: He, who com- "mitteth Sin, is of the Devil."---A just *Rebuke* this, for the *past*, and an excellent *Rule* for the *future*, Conduct of the Christian World. As far indeed as these Words are to be considered as a *Rebuke*, (or Reprehension) they do not immediately affect us at *present*: For, God be thanked, among all the Crimes, for which we have to answer, it can scarcely be said of any * Sect of *modern* Christians, that they maintain in *Theory* the Opinions of the antient GNOSTICKS; or that they would recommend Christianity, as a Screen and Protection for a wicked Life, instead of asserting it to be a powerful Incentive to Repentance and Reformation.

BUT, tho' the *Rebuke* is, in Part at least, unnecessary to be insisted on in the *present* Age, yet the *Rule and Direction resulting from it* is certainly at *all* Times expedient: And may perhaps be peculiarly seasonable to be urged at a Juncture, when the Pleasures and Dissipations, besides the Business and Cares of Life, have so engaged the Thoughts of Men, that they seem to have neither Time, nor Inclination for any Thing else.

* Except perhaps some of the *Moravians*: See *Rimius's* authentic Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Sect of the *Moravians*, or *Unitas Fratrum*, in a short Account of their Doctrines, drawn from their own Writings. Price 1s. 6d.

To rouse them therefore from this fatal Lethargy, and to inspire them with Notions more becoming *reasonable* Beings (and much more becoming Christians), I have selected this Text, as what has a natural Tendency to produce serious Meditations, and to exercise the Mind with thinking on that solemn Account, which each of us must one Day give.—And may that omnipresent Being, who is now beholding all our *Words* and *Works*, nay, even our *inmost Thoughts*, direct us in the Pursuit of this awful Subject, that we may neither *deceive ourselves*, nor be *deceived by others*: But that we may truly learn what that *Righteousness* is, which is so indispensably *required* of us: And, having *learnt* and known it, may we steadily and effectually *practise* the same through the whole Course of our future Behaviour, and Conversation. *Amen.*

Now *to do Righteousness* must certainly imply, in this Place, such a State of Repentance and Reformation, as God will accept through the Mercies of the Christian Covenant; for, if it implied *less* than this, the Danger of being *deceived*, and of being finally *lost*, would still remain: And it cannot imply *more*, because the utmost Degree of Perfection, to which our Righteousness can possibly be carried, will not supersede the Necessity of a Covenant of Grace, Mercy, and Forgiveness, in order to our Acceptance. So that, though it be true, that

K

when

when we *do Righteousness*, we then *are righteous*, even as God is *righteous*, this Righteousness must be understood to mean only a Righteousness of *Imitation*, not of *Perfection*, much less of *Equality*.

THIS being granted, we are now to consider *when* this State of accepted Righteousness is to *commence*, and how long to *last*? In regard to the *former* Part of the Inquiry, certain it is that, had Mankind been Creatures perfectly innocent, the Date of their Acceptance would have been coeval with that of their Innocence.—But now, “*as all the World are become guilty before God,*” our Acceptance cannot be prior to our Repentance: And it is wholly owing to the Mercies of the Gospel Covenant, that we have sure Grounds of being accepted, *even* on our *Repentance*.

BUT here a Difficulty has been sometimes started,—What is meant by *Repentance*? For *some* have asserted, that it must necessarily imply an agonizing Sensation of Guilt, and a soul-piercing Remorse; and *others* have affirmed, that it means only a *Change* of Principles and Practices from Evil to Good, without any *express Necessity* of such Anguish and bitter Remorse, as the former mention; unless in *very particular* and *extraordinary* Cases.

THOSE who maintain the *first* Opinion, seem to regard nothing else, as a *Proof*, which can be

be depended on, towards making *Conversion* become effectual to the Saving of the Soul ;---and therefore they build so much on this *single* Evidence, that they date the *Time* of their *New-Birth*, *Adoption*, and *Justification*, and consequently of their *Acceptance*, from the very *Day*, or *Hour*, in which they have felt this *particular* Anguish, and *preternatural* Remorse.

THOSE, who maintain the *second* Opinion, ground their Notions on the *general* Nature of Repentance, and the *Effects* produced by it. If say they, the Sinner *forsakes* the Error of his Ways, and *embraces* the Mercies of God offered in the Gospel, his *Repentance* must be *valid*; because it has produced all the Effects to be expected from it, and has wrought that *Change* of Heart and Behaviour, which were requisite in order to render him a *new* Man, “ accepted in “ the Beloved.” And truly the Words of my Text, as well as several other Passages of Scripture, seem to fix the *whole* of Repentance on this *firm* Basis,—“ He, who doeth Righteousness, is “ righteous.”

BUT nevertheless, as the *Notion* of *sudden* and *instantaneous* Conversions, and the *Pangs* of the New-Birth, has been, and may still be held by some *well-meaning* Christians, to be a *Doctrine* of the Gospel; who therefore quote such Texts of Scripture, as they apprehend to be favourable in their Cause, it may be very proper to *examine*

this Matter to the Bottom, and to shew in what *Cases*, and under what *Limitations*, it ought to be allowed.

I. A CONVERSION then may be *sudden* and *instantaneous*, where the *Conviction itself* is wrought *by Surprise*. For, when that happens to be the Case, the Nature of the Fact suggests the Reason why the *Conversion* was so brought about, without Debate or Deliberation; and why it could not well have happened otherwise.

THUS for Example, we read in the second Chapter of the Acts, that *the Jews*, being assembled at the great Feast of Pentecost from every Nation of the then known World, and “hearing
“the Disciples speak with other Tongues, as
“the Spirit gave them Utterance, were all a-
“mazed, and marvelled, saying one to another,
“Behold, are not these which speak Galilæans?
“And how hear we every Man in our own
“Tongue wherein we were born, Parthians,
“and Medes, and Elamites, &c. &c. we hear
“them speaking in *our* Tongues the wonderful
“Works of GOD.” The Matter could not rest here. For immediately upon this, they discovered, that the Person, whom they had crucified as an Impostor, was actually the true and long expected MESSIAH, the Lord of Life and Glory; and that this very Miracle of Speaking with new Tongues was wrought in Confirmation of the Truth of his Mission. Their Terror and Astonishment

nishment therefore redoubled on them; and
 “they were pricked to the Heart; and said
 “unto PETER, and unto the Rest of the Apostles,
Men and Brethren, what shall we do?”

AGAIN, we read in the sixteenth Chapter of the Acts, that the Jailer, who kept PAUL and SILAS, was seized with the like sudden Surprise.
 “He was awaked out of Sleep by a great
 “Earthquake, which shook the Foundations of
 “the Prison, and opened all the Doors, and
 “loosed every Prisoner’s Bands.” In this
 Fright and Consternation “he drew out his
 “Sword, and would have killed himself, sup-
 “posing the Prisoners had fled. But PAUL cried
 “out with a loud Voice, saying, Do thyself no
 “Harm; for we are all here. Then he called
 “for a Light, and sprang in, and came trem-
 “bling, and fell down before PAUL and SILAS;
 “and brought them out, and said, *Sirs, what
 “must I do to be saved?*”

Now it was hardly possible, that the Mind could have been a *Moment* in Suspense in either of these Cases: The Evidence was too strong to admit of Debate, or Parley: And the Conviction, which flashed like Lightning on their Minds, extorted an *instantaneous* Confession of what they then felt.

2. BUT a Conversion may be sudden, not only from a *sudden Change of Belief* (or Sentiments) as in the Cases just mentioned, but likewise

wife from a *sudden Application of a previous Belief* to a Conscience involved in Guilt.—PETER for Instance was struck *suddenly* with Remorse on our LORD's turning back and looking on him. Yet this Anguish did not arise from any *new Evidence*, that CHRIST was the true MESSIAH (because he had never made any Doubt of it, tho' he dissembled outwardly for Fear of Man); but it arose from a *new, and sudden Reproach*, with which both the upbraiding Looks of our LORD, and his own guilty Conscience smote him at that Moment.

So likewise when NATHAN retorted on DAVID, that cutting and condemning Sentence, "*Thou art the Man,*" he did not add any *new Light* to DAVID's Mind to convince him, that Murder and Adultery were heinous Sins against God; but by artfully relating the Parable of the rich Man, of the Traveller, the poor Man, and his one Ewe Lamb, he brought the Case home to the Royal Judge unawares, and *surprized* him into a Condemnation of his own detestable Crimes.

AND indeed *this Kind* of Conversion will not admit of much *Delay*, or Deliberation: For generally speaking, it must be *sudden*, and *instantaneous*, or *not at all*. If the Heart of the Sinner is so hardened, as to resist the *first Impressions* made on it by Means of some providential Circumstances flashing Guilt and Horror on the Mind,

Mind, little Good is to be expected from *subsequent* Reflections. For when the Sinner has had *Time* to recover from his *first* Alarm, he has Recourse to all those Artifices of Palliation and Excuse, which a fruitful Imagination can suggest to a corrupted Heart, ready to receive the Infection; and he *deceives* himself into a fond Opinion of his darling, bosom Vice, by a thousand little Subterfuges and Evasions.

HOWEVER, if it be necessary, or at least expedient, that *some* Sort of Men should be wrought on by *quick* Impulses, or *sudden* Shocks, it is equally certain, that *others* may be converted by *more gentle* Methods, and *gradual* Convictions: *Examples* of which are plentifully recorded in the Scriptures. The *Bereans*, mentioned in the Acts by St. PAUL, gave not their Consent *immediately* to the first Preaching of the Gospel, but *pondered*, and *meditated* on it, comparing spiritual Things with spiritual. For “*they searched the Scriptures daily, whether these Things were so:*” And this *Search* and *Deliberation* was so far from being imputed to them, as a Crime, that it is recorded to their particular Honour: They “*were more noble than those of Thessalonica,*” by acting in this impartial and rational Manner. Again---The *good Centurion*, the first Convert from the Gentile to the Christian World, seems to have felt no agonizing Sensations of Guilt and

and Remorse, during the Time of his *Conversion*. For the Account given by himself, and by St. PETER, intimates nothing of this Sort. He says, that “ after he had fasted and prayed until
 “ the ninth Hour, a Man stood before him in
 “ bright Cloathing; who said, CORNELIUS, thy
 “ Prayer is heard, and thine Alms are had in
 “ Remembrance in the Sight of God. Send
 “ therefore to Joppa, and call hither SIMON,
 “ whose Sirname is PETER;---who when he
 “ cometh shall speak unto thee. Immedi-
 “ ately therefore I sent unto thee, and thou hast
 “ done well that thou art come. Now there-
 “ fore are we all here present before God, to
 “ hear all Things that are commanded thee of
 “ God.” And then the History goes on to in-
 form us, that after PETER had preached Salva-
 tion by CHRIST unto them; and even while he
 spake these Words, the Holy Ghost fell on *all*
 them, which heard the Word. And they of
 the Circumcision were astonished, as many as
 came with PETER, because that on the *Gentiles*
 also was poured out the *Gift of the Holy Ghost*.
 For they heard them speak with Tongues, and
 magnify God.

Now from a *Review* of this Transaction what
 shall we say? Or what *Inference* can we draw?
 We may *conclude* indeed that their Conversion
 was *sudden*, and *instantaneous in one Respect*, be-
 cause

cause the *Nature* of the Case required it so to be:---That is, there was a *sudden Alteration* in, or rather an *Addition* made to the Belief of *Cornelius*, and his *Company* by St. PETER's Preaching: But surely we cannot say, that they felt any *sudden* Shocks of Horror, or Agonies of Mind in consequence of his Preaching: Or that they were tormented with the Stings of a guilty Conscience, and the Lashes of Despair, before they were admitted into a justified State.

WHAT happened in *this* Case might, and actually did, happen in *some others*. Thus we read in the sixteenth Chapter of the Acts, that *LYDIA* of *Thyatira*, after having heard the Preaching of St. PAUL, was *converted*---certainly without feeling any of those Horrors of a despairing Conscience, which some Persons mention as a necessary *Proof* of Conversion;---and *probably* without finding any *sudden Change* of Sentiments, or rapid *Alteration* of Belief. For the Account given of her is, that being one of those, *who worshipped God*; that is, being so far a Convert from Pagan Idolatry, as to adore the true God of the Jews, the great JEHOVAH, the LORD “*opened her Heart that she attended to the Things, which were spoken by PAUL.*” Which Expression of *attending* to his Preaching intimates very probably a State of Mind, not immediately assenting, but rather weighing, con-

L

dering

dering, and deliberating on the Things, which were spoken. And the *Context* favours this Opinion: For, after she was baptized, and her *Houſhold*, (which latter Circumſtance plainly intimates, that ſome Time was taken up between her own Conversion, and the Baptiſm of all her Houſhold) ſhe beſought PAUL and SILAS, ſaying, “ *If ye have judged me faithful to the Lord,*” (which Exprefſion certainly implies no Perturbation, or Agony of Mind) “ *come into my Houſe,* “ *and abide there.*”

BUT what need have we of more *ſcriptural Authorities*? Is it not obvious, that the like Events frequently come to paſs in common Life, and within our own Notice? *Some*, being trained from their Infancy in the Way they ſhould go, and having tractable Diſpoſitions of their own, and good Examples continually before their Eyes, perſevere in a general Courſe of right Conduct to the End of their Lives, and go to the Grave with the comfortable *Reflection* of a well ſpent Life. Theſe therefore cannot be ſaid to have been goaded by the Stings of Conſcience, or the Agonies of Deſpair in any Degree, which deſerves to be recorded.

Others having taken to evil Courſes, are prevented from ſinning for a Time, by ſome reſtraining, outward Providence; and during this happy Interval, better Thoughts and cooler Reflections

Reflections may keep them from *returning* to their former bad Course of Life, even tho' the outward Restraint has been removed. At length the Love of God, and the Principles of Religion may have some *Effect* on them; and thus they may *gradually* become sincere Converts and real Christians, without passing through any of those agonizing Sensations, which are by *some* described, as the infallible Marks of *true Conversion*.

ON the whole, nothing can be concluded, either from *sudden*, or from *gradual* Conversions, from *piercing* Compunctions, or *gentle* Drawings of the Holy Spirit, considered *merely in themselves*. And whether we are drawn at first by the Cords of *Love*, or driven by the Lashes of *Fear*, is not so material, as whether we persevere unto the END. Here then is the *great Point*: And on *this* let us fix our Attention. Nay, the Apostle in my Text plainly tells us, that *this* is the Side, on which we are most liable to dangerous Errors; and therefore should be most prepared to guard against them. --“Let no Man *deceive* you---*He*, who doeth Righteousness, is *righteous*, even as God is *righteous*: But he, *who committeth Sin*, is of the Devil.” As therefore we are well assured, that *Repentance* will reinstate us, and that *Obedience* will continue us in the Divine Favour, according to the gra-

cious Terms of the Gospel; so likewise let us ever *remember*, that “*He*, who wilfully and habitually committeth Sin,” (whatever Evidence of his New-birth, or Justification, his Adoption, or Acceptance, he may *fancy* himself possessed of) “is actually *no other*, than the *Servant of Sin*, and the *Slave of the Devil*.”

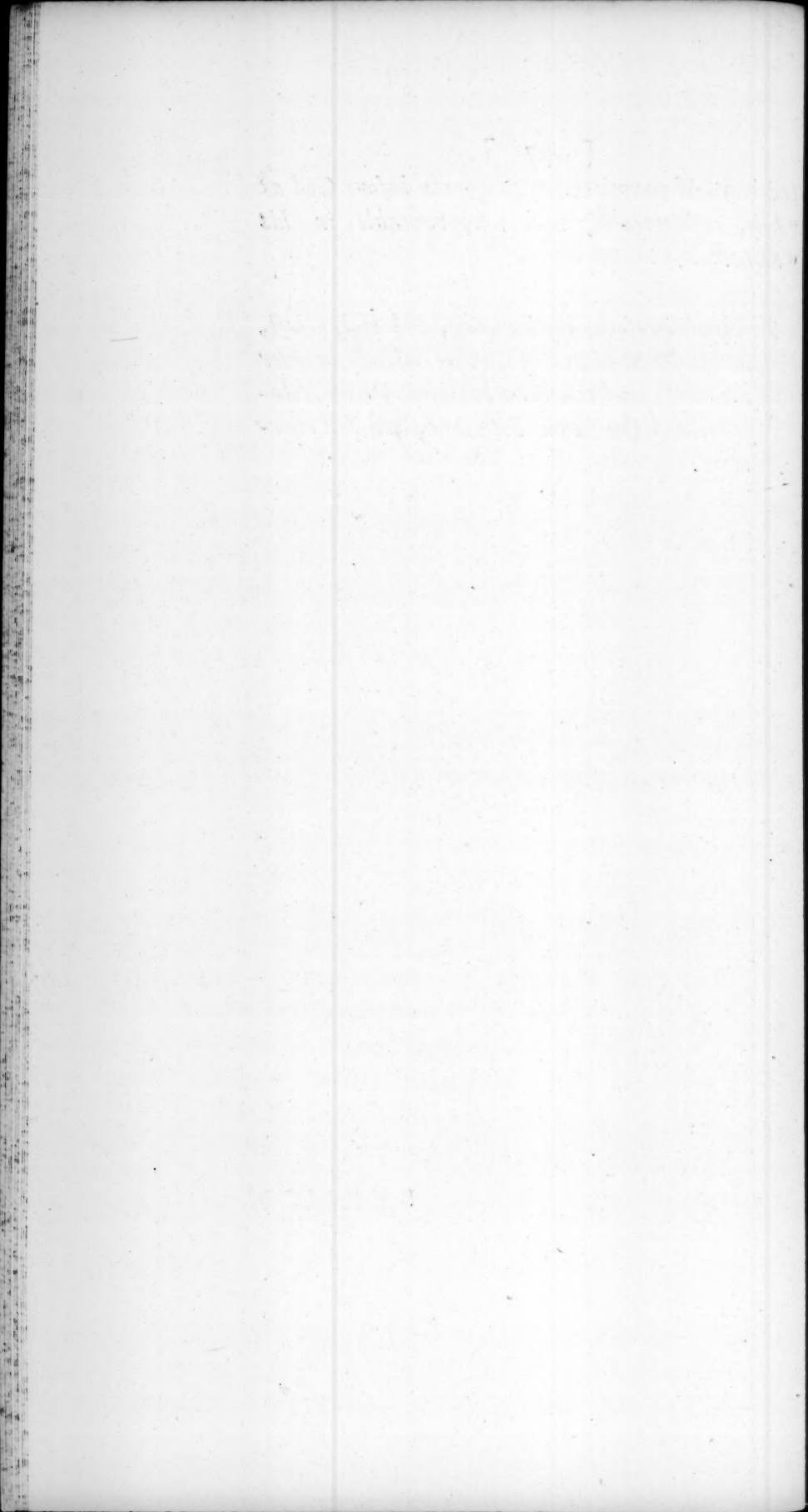
IN short, Virtue and Vice, Holiness and Wickedness, CHRIST and Belial can never, never unite together: If therefore we design ourselves to be the Candidates for Heaven, we must endeavour to acquire *such Qualifications*, as will render us *fit* for that Holy Place; because unless we really acquire them during the present State, the Alternative is dreadful indeed: For “*He*, who committeth Sin, is of the Devil.”--- How shocking even to *repeat*; yet much more shocking to *feel*!--to *feel* not only for a Time, but for ever.

WHEREAS, on the contrary, “*He*, who doeth “*Righteousness*, is righteous, even as God is “*righteous* :” Righteous, I say, he is, because he will have, not only his manifold Failings and Imperfections all forgiven, through the *Mercies* of the Gospel Covenant, but even his deliberate Sins and Offences cancelled and blotted out, on his sincere *Repentance*: And what is still more than ever could have been thought of, much less petitioned for, he will
find

find himself permitted "to appear before God as
"holy, unblameable, and unreprieveable in his
"Sight."

*To him therefore, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
let these Miracles of divine Mercy be ever
ascribed; and to whom be Glory, Praise, Ma-
jesty, and Dominion, both now, and for ever-
more.*

2



6

6



S E R M O N V.

LUKE xxiii. 39,—43.

One of the Malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due Reward of our Deeds: But this Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.



AS the HOLY SCRIPTURES are the *Word of Life*, when truly understood, it seems evidently to follow, that when they are *perverted* from this good Purpose, and made to speak a Language not only different from their *real* Meaning, but even *opposite*

posite to it, such a *Perversion* may be attended with a *quite contrary* Effect: For, if the *Light*, which is in us, should be turned into *Darkness*, how great and deplorable must *that Darkness* be! And, if our *very Food* should be converted into *Poison*, what else can we have, or where shall we apply for the *wholesome* Nutrition of our Souls, or Bodies?

Now, in order to *prevent* this Evil, at least in some Respect, in regard to our better Part, the *Soul*; or if the Contagion should be already begun, in order to recover the Deceased, as well as to secure the Uninfected, I have chosen this Portion of St. LUKE's Gospel for my Text, as what, by the Blessing of God, may be *the Means* of inspiring a Christian Congregation with *right* Notions concerning a *Point*, in which their eternal Salvation is so nearly interested:—I mean a *late*, a *sudden*, or a *death-bed* Repentance.

THERE is no Man, who *believes* a future State, but *wishes*, that he may be *happy* in it. So far *all* are agreed. But alas! when we come to consider the *Terms* (or Conditions) on which this Happiness is attainable, various, and almost contradictory are the Sentiments of Mankind. Not that any one, especially among those, who profess a Belief of the Gospel, would go about to maintain in a serious and direct Manner, that the Christian Dispensation has positively annexed the Enjoyment of Happiness in *another* Life to the Practice

Practice of Wickedness in *this*; or that the broad Road of Sin leads directly to the Gate of Heaven:---No! This is a Position too gross and absurd to be believed in its genuine Form. And yet this very Absurdity, or something extremely like it, will not only pass without being objected to, but be embraced with Greediness, and even be maintained with Exultation, if a little modified, and dressed up, and if a small Degree of Art and Colouring should be used to soften and disguise the *Harshness* of its Features.

THUS for Instance: As the Gospel of CHRIST hath expressly declared, That *Repentance* and *Remission of Sins* ought to be preached unto *all* Nations; and that the very *End* and *Essence* of the Covenant of Grace, is, that GOD might “purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works;” (Tit. ii. 14.) it was in vain to preach the *Remission of Sins* without inculcating the *Necessity of Repentance and Amendment of Life* at the same Time. What then is to be done?—The whole *Tenor* of the Gospel is uniform, as to this Point. *Not one Precept, not one Command, not one Exhortation* can be produced, that doth not tend to the *same* Thing. And the *general Doctrine* of *all*, and of *every* Part is comprized and summed up in this short, expressive, and momentous Sentence, “*Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.*” (Heb. xii. 14.)

M

SINCE

SINCE therefore no Distinctions, or Subterfuges can be found for *evading* the general Doctrine; may it not nevertheless be *sapped* or *undermined*? And tho' both *Repentance* and *Holiness* are so strenuously inculcated, as not to be *openly* dispensed with, may not some such ingenious Casuistry be devised, as shall lull our Consciences asleep, and make us rest contented with a *very little* Share of *either*? Alas! there may: For every Age and Country, every Church, or Sect of Religion have abounded with various Attempts and Pretences of this Sort. And such *Deceptions* the more easily prevail, as they are sure to find a Friend and an Advocate in the *Corruption* of human Nature.

Now, among the different *Arts* which have been tried at different Times and in different Countries for *evading* the express Commands of the Gospel, none have been more generally practised, or have had a more fatal *Influence*, than that weak *Apology*, which is usually derived from the *supposed* Example of the *penitent Thief* on the Cross. For this *Instance of Forgiveness* is generally imagined to be a *Case in Point*: And therefore the *reasoning* on it must be supposed to proceed somewhat in the following Manner.

“ THERE appears to be nothing very difficult
 “ in the *Performance* here required, or discourag-
 “ ing in the *Example*:--’Tis true, the *Malefactor* is
 “ described by the Evangelist, as a *real Penitent*:
 “ But

“ But then ’tis observable, that a *very little*,
 “ and a *very short* Repentance was judged to
 “ *suffice*. One *single* Rebuke to a Brother-ma-
 “ lefactor, and one short Petition to our LORD,
 “ to be *remembered* when he came into his King-
 “ dom, is all which is recorded. And yet,
 “ without waiting for a *farther* Trial, without
 “ requiring a *longer* Probation, and without *any*
 “ *other* Fruits of Repentance, except the *two*
 “ *short* Expressions before mentioned, our LORD
 “ pronounced the gracious Sentence, Verily I
 “ say unto thee, *To-day shalt thou be with me in*
 “ *Paradise*. What a joyful Sound! What an
 “ encouraging Invitation! And who need de-
 “ spair, after having such an *Example* for our
 “ *Imitation*; and such a *Pardon*, and so glo-
 “ rious a *Reward* proposed for our *Comfort*?”—
 Indeed, indeed, my Christian Brethren, a Re-
 gard for your immortal Souls, joined to a Desire
 of discharging my own Conscience, obliges me
 to declare, that this is *very far* from being “ the
 “ *Truth*, as it is in JESUS.”

1. FOR, in the first Place, the *Example* of
 the penitent Thief on the Cross is not once pro-
 posed in Scripture for our *Imitation*.

2. NOR is there any *Proof*, that his Repen-
 tance was either a *short*, or a *sudden* one.

3. NOR can *our* Case and Circumstances be
 supposed to be similar to *his* in almost any Re-
 spect whatever.

1. My first Proposition is, That the *Example* of the *penitent Thief* on the Cross is not *once* proposed in Scripture for our *Imitation*.

SURELY this is a Point, which cannot bear a *long* Debate; for the Case itself is mentioned *but once*; and by *one* Evangelist only, who doth not intimate the least *Intention* of recording this Fact in order to serve as a *Pattern* for the Christian World to *copy after*. Whereas this *very same* Evangelist expressly proposes the Conduct of the *good Samaritan*, as an *Example* worthy of *Imitation*:—*Go thou, and do likewise*. And yet alas! how *seldom* is *what* the Evangelist so *expressly proposed*, the Object of our Attention! how frequently is what he did *not* propose, the Subject of our Desires!

BUT perhaps you may ask, If the *Instance* of the *penitent Thief* on the Cross was *not* proposed, as a Model for us to copy after, why then was it *recorded*? And if the Doctrine of the Acceptance of a late or a *death-bed* Repentance is *not* to be *inferred* from the favourable Reception he met with; what *other* Lesson are we to *suppose* that it was intended to communicate?---It will be difficult I confess to answer this Question in *direct* Terms; because many Things *may*, and *must* be mentioned in the Course of an History, for which no *particular* (or immediate) Reason can be assigned. Nay it is observable in the very Transaction now before us, that *Simon the Cyrenean* is mentioned
by

by Name, as having been compelled to carry the Cross of CHRIST to the Place of his Crucifixion;---and yet surely it would be *weak to infer*, that the Evangelist had any *particular Doctrine* to inculcate by being thus descriptive of this Man's Name, and his Place of Abode.---However, perhaps we may proceed *farther* than this in the *present Case*; perhaps we may be able to assign some *worthy Reason*, why *one* Evangelist hath recorded what the *others* have omitted. Now they *all* take Notice, that JESUS was crucified between two Thieves: And they *all* observe, that this was done in order that a Prophecy should be accomplished, which foretold of the MESSIAH, that "*He should be numbered with the Transgressors*;" Isa. liii. 2. But St. LUKE, by proceeding *farther*, and by recording the *extraordinary* Behaviour of *one* of these Transgressors, might probably intend to perpetuate the *Memory* of an Event, which *was the only one of its Kind*:---I mean the *Discovery* made by this Malefactor of the *true Nature* of CHRIST's Kingdom, and the *Profession* of his *Faith in a crucified Saviour*. For *no one, but himself* of the whole *Jewish Nation* (the Apostles themselves not excepted) had any *other* Notion at this Juncture, than that of a *temporal* MESSIAH. His *Discernment* therefore of the MESSIAH's *real* Character was the *more wonderful* under such unpromising Circumstances; and his *Faith* the more heroic.

BUT

BUT *all these* Considerations will yet appear in a *more striking* Light, when I come to ob-
serve

2. THAT we have no *Proofs* from Scripture, that the *Repentance* of this Criminal was either a *sudden*, or a *short* one.

HAD it indeed been *said*, or even *suggested*, that the unhappy Man remained obdurate and obstinate almost to the last, and would *not* repent, though often cautioned, invited, and called upon,---alleging for a Reason, that it would be Time enough, when he came actually to suffer on the Cross; such a Complication of Guilt, together with the ample Pardon and Absolution, which were granted to the Guilty, would have administered (it must be confessed) the *greatest Encouragement* to all succeeding Sinners to hope for the *like Acceptance*. And the joyful Declaration of "*To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise,*" might have been expected to have been sounded in every Ear at the last Gasps of Life.

BUT the Misfortune is, that the Scriptures do not afford the *least Shadow of a Proof* in Support of such a Doctrine. And the *Example* now before us is so far from giving *any Countenance* to these dangerous Notions, that when thoroughly sifted and duly examined, I am persuaded, it will be an Evidence of *just the contrary*.

As

As to the *Man himself*, the Object of our Inquiry, we know nothing concerning the peculiar Degree of his Guilt,---the Length of his Imprisonment,---his Behaviour at his Trial,---or his Conduct afterwards. And therefore as to these Things, we ought to observe a profound Silence. But as he was a *Jew*, we know that he must have believed, in common with *all other Jews*, that the MESSIAH was shortly to appear:---Nay we may go farther, and assuredly conclude, that he was bred up in the *common Prejudices* of the whole Jewish Nation, namely, that *this Messiah* would assume the Character of a *temporal Prince*, and a mighty Conqueror; who was to restore again the Kingdom to *Israel*, and to enrich *Jerusalem* with the Spoil and Plunder of *other Nations*, especially of the ROMANS.

THE Question therefore is, *When* and *how* came *this Man* so totally to *change* his Sentiments concerning the *Nature* and *Design* of the MESSIAH'S Kingdom; and to adopt *others* so very different, as well as so very just?---The only *human Means* of doing this (and his *Conversion* is not recorded as a *Miracle*: Indeed if it *was*, it would be *still less* proper for *human Imitation*; and therefore, I say, the only *human Means* of doing this) is by a very careful and attentive *Comparison* of the Character of the MESSIAH, as described by the Prophets, with the Doctrine, and the Miracles

cles, the Birth and Life, the Actions and Sufferings of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. Judge therefore, whether a Work of *this* Nature was to be the Work of *Time*, or to be performed in an *Hurry*. Nay, judge likewise, whether the two *preliminary* Articles of getting the better of the *Prejudices* of Education, and of the *Attachments* of national Vanity, in order to compare with Exactness, and to determine with Impartiality;—judge whether these could have been the Effects of a *few Moments*—*Moments* I say, under the Rack of Pain on the Cross, or even during the cruel Suspension of expecting to suffer. And yet, this *single* Man, when the very Apostles themselves had given up all for lost, saying “We *trusted*, that it had been HE (meaning CHRIST) “which should have redeemed “Israel.”---This *single* Man, this *one* Exception, not only acted *piously* in addressing himself to CHRIST, saying, “LORD, remember me when “thou comest into thy Kingdom,”---but also reasoned justly, accurately, and precisely on the Matter, by declaring to his Brother-Malefactor, “This Man (the Man CHRIST JESUS) hath done “*nothing amiss*.”---Now the original Word here translated, *nothing amiss*, is οὐδὲν ἀσπον, that is *nothing out of its Place*, nothing improper, nothing irregular, but all according to due, and appointed Order. And therefore the *Words themselves* necessarily imply, that *this Man* must have

have taken uncommon Pains in thus searching out, (*whenever* he did it, or *how long* soever he was about it) and in thus *comparing* Things, and Prophecies, and Facts together, and also in summing up the Evidences on *both* Sides; so as to determine with Truth and Justice in respect to our *Lord*, and with a good Conscience, and pious *Repentance* in regard to *himself*.

3. WHEREFORE, I pass on to observe, that it is hardly possible, that *our* penitential State of Mind *can* be similar to *his* in any *one material* Circumstance.

IN what Respect can it be *alike*? Or wherein can we *compare Facts*, or Principles together? It is true, we are *all Sinners*; and we *all* have Need of *Repentance*: But surely there is nothing *peculiar* in this: And were this *alone* to determine the *Similitude* of the Cases, there could be no such Thing as a Discrimination between one Man and another. But in Truth, the *Inquiries* should be,—Have *we* the same *Prejudices* to overcome, which *he* had? Surely no. Do we labour under the same *Difficulties* which he laboured under? By no Means. Or can it at present be any *Doubt*, whether, the Saviour on the Cross was to be a victorious Hero for the Benefit of *one Nation only*, or to be the spiritual Redeemer of *all Mankind*?—There can be *no Doubt* on this Head *now* remaining. And farther, as to the *Doctrine of Repen-*

N

tance:

tance: The Criminal repented; and so ought you, and I:---But we cannot *learn* from *his* Example, whether a *late*, a *sudden*, or a *death bed* Repentance will *suffice*, or *not*? *Much less* can we pretend to exult in an absolute *Certainty of Forgiveness*, and boast of having received the *Earneſt* and *Foretaſte* of *everlaſting Peace*. On the contrary, if *his* Example is to be at all propounded for our *Imitation*, it ſhould be in this; that tho' *his* Faith excelled the Faith of *all* the Sons of Men then exiſting, yet he preſumed not to utter any other Requeſt, than this modeſt Petition, this humble Prayer, fervent in Hope, tho' mixt with ſome Diffidence, "*Lord, remember me, " when thou com'eſt into thy Kingdom.*" And ſurely, my Chriſtian Brethren, if each of us can have as good Pretenſions to proceed *thus far*, it is far enough: For the proceeding *thus far* will answer all the Ends of ſolid Piety, and a juſt Reliance on the Promiſes of GOD; tho' it does not ſoar up to the Heights of *enthuſiaſtic Confidence*, and ſtops vaſtly ſhort of *arrogant Preſumption*.

HOWEVER, there is *one important Point* yet to be diſcuſſed; which ought by no Means to be *omitted* in a Diſcourſe of *this Nature*; and that is, *If we are to derive no Conſolation from the Example of the penitent Thief on the Croſs; from whence are we to look for Comfort and Encouragement?*—*And if a Perſon has been ſo unhappy as to defer his Repentance to the laſt, what is he to do?*

Or

Or how shall he be assured, that he will be forgiven?

It is undoubtedly *the Duty* of every Man at all Times to *repent*, and to implore the *Mercies* of his Heavenly Father, whether in Health, or at the Hour of Death: But he can have no *rational Assurance*, no Evidence fit to be depended on, that *his Pardon is sealed*, 'till his *Faith and his Repentance* have produced their genuine *Effects* in his *Life and Actions*. Indeed a *death-bed Repentance* may be efficacious; because it may be sincere: But *who* is to be the *Judge* of that Sincerity?---Not the Minister;---not the By-Standers; not the Sick, or dying Person himself: * *For they may all be deceived.*

* The *Form of Absolution* in our Office for the Visitation of the Sick, is justly liable to Censure on this Account. For it pretends to such a Knowledge of the human Heart, as cannot belong to any mortal Man, without an express Revelation. The Priest is *there* directed to say to the sick Person, (*knowing* him to be a true *Penitent*, and a sincere *Believer*; see the preceding Words,)---“*By his* (our LORD JESUS CHRIST'S) *Authority committed to me, I ABSOLVE thee from ALL thy Sins.*”---Dr. COMBER endeavours to justify this Passage, and succeeds according to the Manner of those, who attempt Impossibilities. Mr. WHEATLY offers some Apologies. The late Dr. STEBBING, in his excellent little Tract against Popery, fairly gives it up, as indefensible. I do the same; and esteem it to be among the Number of those *real Blemishes, Spots, and Imperfections* IN OUR CHURCH, which ought to be *removed*, when a proper *Opportunity* shall present. [See my *Apology for the Church of England*; Second Edition, Page 63.] Were the pious and precatory *Form of Absolution* in our Communion Service, (and which actually is the *very Form* prescribed to be used in the *Communion of the Sick*) were *this*, I say to be used, instead of the *other*, all would be *right*.

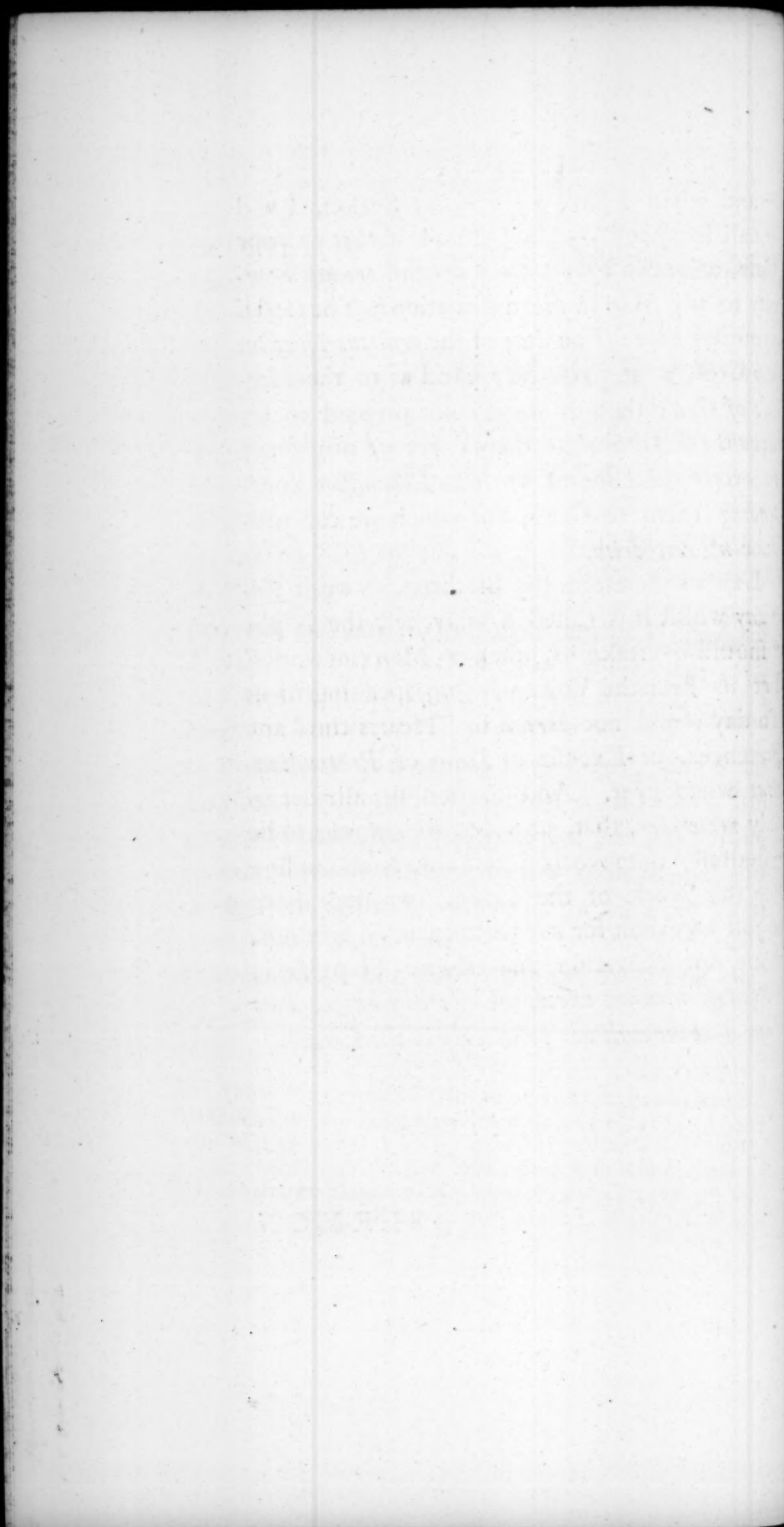
GOD alone, the Searcher of Hearts, is the *only Judge* in such a Case: And if he doth not work a *Miracle* by an *immediate Revelation* (which surely is not to be expected) there can be no *rational* Grounds, that any such Person is *absolutely pardoned*. In the mean Time our fervent *Prayers*, and earnest *Endeavours* are still to be continued while Life remains. And we are *charitably to hope* the best.---But beyond a *charitable Hope*, we dare not go: For we have no *Warrant*, no *Authority from Scripture* to proceed to *greater Lengths*. In short, would you wish to have some *Proof*, which might be depended on, that you are in a *safe State*, and in the *actual Favour of God*?---A Life of Piety, and Virtue, or Christian Principles shining forth in Christian Practice will furnish you with *that Proof*: For then you have the *Witness within yourself*. Would you be glad to know, whether your *Repentance* is *valid, and sincere*; and therefore *available*, according to the Terms of the Gospel?---*Repent in Time, and bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*: And then likewise you are *very safe*. But do you chuse to *delay* your Repentance 'till the last? And tho' you know, that you are called at the *first*, and at *every Hour of the Day*, do you intend to refuse to *obey* this heavenly Call 'till the *Eleventh*? Mat. xx. 6. And do you say to your upbraiding Conscience, as FELIX did to PAUL, "Go thy Way for this Time,"

" and

“and when I have a *convenient* Season, I will “call for thee?”---Alas! Alas! if *that* be your Case, *what* can I say? Or *how* can I *promise Security* to any Man in *such* a Situation? The Gospel promises *none*: The Case of the *penitent Thief* on the Cross is *no Precedent*: And as to the *Mercies of God*; though we do not pretend to set *Bounds* (or *Limits*) to them; yet we ought not to *exceed* the Line of our *own Commission* in *extending* them to Cases, for which we can produce *no Authority*.

LET us therefore, my Brethren, “work *To-day* whilst it is called *To-day*, lest the Night “should overtake us, when no Man can work.” Let us hear the Voice of God speaking to us *To-day*; and not *harden* our Hearts thro’ any Pretences, or Excuses of *Delay* or *Procrastinations* whatsoever. And to sum up all, let us duly *remember*, that, provided we *continue* to be “steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding “in the Work of the LORD,” we shall have no just Occasion for *any* Doubts, or Misgivings, about our Salvation and future Happiness: “*Because then we know, we assuredly know, that “our Labour will not be in vain in the Lord.*”

SERMON





*S E R M O N VI.

I COR. ix. 22.

---*That I might by all Means save some.*

N setting forth the *Use*, and *Expediency* of any Design or Undertaking, where there is a *great Choice* of Arguments to be offered in Recommendation of the Thing proposed, it cannot fail, but that at first *some* of these Motives will be more largely insisted on, and more warmly prest, than *others*. For *such* Reasons will naturally have the Preference to begin with, as are either the most *obvious* in themselves, --or as they explain the *primary* and more *immediate* Ends and Advantages

* This Sermon was preached *before the Contributors to the Bristol Infirmary*, at their Anniversary Meeting on *March 18, 1745-6*, and then published *at their Request*, for the Perusal of the *Patients* in that Infirmary: And it is here *re-printed* by Desire of some Friends, who think it may answer the *same Purposes elsewhere*; especially as *so many* Infirmaries are now established in different Parts of this Kingdom.

in

in View,---or else, as they may happen to be the most *popular* and *prevailing* Topicks to be urged, in order to persuade others into an *Ap- probation* of the Design.

AND thus it hath happened (as far as I can observe) with the Considerations *hitherto* made Use of in recommending that Sort of Charity, which is to be the *Subject* of this Day's Discourse. For tho' these Kinds of laudable *Institutions* may be viewed in *many distinct* Points of Light, and be seen to great Advantage from *each*; yet undoubtedly the more *obvious*, the more *immediate* and *proximate* Design of them all was, *to provide a Cure and Remedy for the Maladies and Diseases of the helpless and laborious Poor*: And consequently, it was expedient, (at least for a Season) that other *secondary* Motives, however weighty and important, should be *post-poned*, or but just *hinted* at, 'till ample Justice was done to *this*, and 'till a sufficient Repetition of it, would, as it were, demand a *new* Subject for the Sake of Variety.

WHAT therefore has hitherto been mostly urged on these Occasions, (after the *general Nature* of Christian Benevolence, and the *proper Motives* towards the *right* Performance of it were duly *noticed*) was principally, “ the *Excellence*, and *Advantage* of these Institutions, for
“ the charitable Purposes, just now mentioned,
“ of curing the Sickneſſes, and relieving the
“ Disorders

“ Disorders of our poor Brethren; and consequently how eminently well they were calculated for the proper Exercise of the noble, and god-like Virtue of Christian Benevolence.”

AND what has been said more *particularly* and *directly* in Commendation of them, may perhaps be thus briefly summed up:—“ That they are founded upon the Principles of *Goodness*, of *Justice*, and of *Prudence*:---That the Virtues and good Dispositions of Mind, which are excited, and cultivated by these Kinds of Charities, have a natural Tendency to render those, who contribute to the Support of them, acceptable both to God, and Man; being attended with the Rewards of *this* Life, as well as with those infinitely greater, of a Life *everlasting*.”

Now, that *all* these several Motives *unite* to plead in Behalf of this *particular* Species of charitable Establishments, has been the *peculiar* Business of those, who have on the preceding Anniversaries been appointed Advocates for this Charity. I shall not therefore here attempt to repeat what has been so well, and so frequently expatiated on, as to need no farther Illustration, or Enforcement.

BUT still, as to any *secondary* Views, to which this Institution may be made *subservient*, these have been rather *casually* touched on, and briefly



hinted

hinted at, than *exprefsly* treated of at *large* in the Discourses, which have before been preached: And particularly the Tendency this Institution has towards retrieving the *almost lost* Sense of Piety and Virtue among the Poor, has not yet, I believe, been fully and distinctly pointed out: Nor have *Infirmaries* been *immediately* considered as so many *Reformatories*, or *Schoools* erected for the *Revival* and *Propagation* of *Morality* and *Religion*, and as *Means*, which may conduce towards a *national Reformation* in the *common People*.

WHEREFORE it shall be my present Endeavour to enlarge on *these Particulars*, and to make them the *peculiar* Subject of this Discourse, by considering the *Good* done to the *Body*, as *introductory* to a *better*, and an *higher* View, namely, to the inculcating a *practical* Sense of Duty towards God, and Man, and to the *Saving of the Soul*. A Consideration this, which verily, in Point of human Prudence, and on the Score of the public Good of Society, cannot be deemed by *any* to be a weak, or improper *Motive* to be joined to the many already referred to, for the recommending of these charitable Foundations: Seeing that Integrity and Justice, Labour and Frugality, Temperance and Sobriety, and the whole Circle of moral and social Duties, are the Things which cause a Nation to thrive and flourish; as the contrary Vices are its certain

Bane

Bane and Ruin:---Even tho' it should be supposed, that *Religion, and a future State* were out of the Question. Nor surely after this, will it need any *Apology*, to those, who look beyond the Concerns of the *present* Life, and whose Hopes are full of *Immortality*, that *such* a Subject should be allowed a *distinct*, and *ample* Consideration in the following Discourse.

To this End therefore, I have chosen for my Text those Words of the Apostle, *that I might by all Means save some*: Where he informs us, that he did many Things, and accommodated himself to the Genius, Tempers, and Wants of *many different* People, where he could consistently do it, for the Sake of gaining the *great End* in View, the Conversion and Salvation of their Souls: "*For he became all Things unto all Men, that he might by all Means save some.*"

WITH the *same* View then, I shall consider the *Institution* of Infirmaries, as the Apostle did the accommodating himself to the Inclinations and Affections of those with whom he conversed; that is, I shall consider it as a *Means*, which, tho' highly *laudable* and *beneficial* in *itself*, is rendered still *more valuable*, by being made subservient to a much *nobler* and *better End*; a *national Reformation, and the Interests of true Religion, and Christian Morality*. Nor can it be objected, if we will but reflect a Moment on the *present* State of the *Principles* and *Morals* of the *lower*

Class of People, that this is a *needless* Design, or an *unnecessary* End for us to propose.

I confess indeed, that the usual Complaints of Mankind, against the Degeneracy of their own Times, are often founded on Prejudice and Mistake. It is hardly possible to conceive, that Vice has been *always* increasing, or Virtue *for ever* on the Decline, since the Foundation of the World. And yet, were we to admit the Accounts which those of a gloomy or satyrical Cast of Mind, have given us of this Degeneracy in every respective Age, we must have concluded, that there has been a *continued* Progress of Wickedness and Immorality, from the *earliest* Times down to the *present*. Every *successive* Generation, according to *them*, has grown worse and worse; and every Man has particularly exclaimed against the Corruptions of the Time in which he lived. But in Reality, the *Cause* of all this arises from hence, that we *see* the Evils of the *present* Age in their full *Magnitude* and *Extent*; no Part is lost, and buried in Oblivion: And we *feel* the ill Effects of them so *sensibly*, that it is no Wonder we should pronounce them to be *worse*, than what have happened in *most* Ages, of which we know so little, and so imperfectly, and in whose Prosperity, or Adversity, we are not *personally* concerned.

BUT yet nevertheless, tho' it must be granted that it certainly is a *wrong* Notion to imagine
that

that the Morals of Mankind are *perpetually* degenerating from bad to worse in *every* Respect; yet there may be *some* Grounds for a *great Part* of the Charge and Accusation, tho' not for the *whole*. For as 'tis known, that *this* or *that* particular *Virtue* or *Vice* may *predominate* at one Season, or among one Class of Men, more than another; so at least it is possible, that some certain Vice may prevail at *present*, to a Degree unheard of before, and so become the *infamous Characteristick* of the Age in which we live; or one particular Rank of Men among us, may be found to be *more* corrupt than usual, and to be immoral above the Rest of the Community. And if so, it is certainly no hard Censure, or false Accusation to affirm, that with respect to *that particular Vice*, or *that Body* of vicious Persons, the present Age is more corrupt than the past, whatever it may be in *other* Respects.

AND in Fact, with regard to the Morals of the *Poor* at present, far from exaggerating the Matter, it must be acknowledged, *Times were never worse**. For the *lower* Class of People are at *this Day* so far degenerated from what they were in *former* Times, as to become a Matter of Asto-

* The Reader will bear in Mind, that this Sermon was preached during the Ferment of the Rebellion, in 1745. Whether the *Times* are since grown *better*, or *worse*, every attentive Observer must judge for himself.

ishment, and a Proverb of Reproach. And if we take the Judgment of *Strangers*, and *Foreigners* of every other Country, who are certainly the most *unexceptionable Judges* in this Respect, we shall find them *all* agreed, in pronouncing the *common People* of our *populous Cities*, to be the most *abandoned*, and *licentious* Wretches on Earth. Such Brutality and Insolence, such Debauchery and Extravagance, such Idleness, Irreligion, Cursing and Swearing, and Contempt of all Rule and Authority, human and divine, do *not* reign so triumphantly among the Poor in *any other* Country, as in *ours*:---Nor did they ever in *ours*, 'till of late, in any Degree to what they do *at present*.

AND the *Reason* of all this is, alas! but too easily assigned:---Our People are *drunk with the Cup of Liberty*. They enjoy it to a Degree unknown to our Forefathers, who lived in a State of *Vassalage* and *Dependence*, little better, than that of Bondage and Slavery; and who by this Means were habituated to think, that it was *above their Sphere*, and fitting only for their *Superiors*, to gratify themselves in Scenes of expensive Pleasures, and criminal Diversions. But their *Posterity* have been growing up into Freedom for several Generations back, and are now become entirely independent, and Masters of themselves, and their own Actions. Their Minds and Inclinations are now set loose to
think

think, and judge, and do as they please: In short, our Constitution is so much altered from what it was in former Times; partly by the prodigious Sinking of the Valuation of Money, which has accidentally let in the whole Body, and even the meanest of the People, to be equally concerned with the greatest, in the Choice of Representatives; and partly by other Contingencies too tedious here to mention; that one might almost say, the lowest of the People are now become the ultimate Judges of public Affairs, and that they are regularly appealed to, at the Expiration of a certain Period of Years, if not oftener, for their expresse Verdict, and Decision. Such a Circumstance cannot fail of giving them Weight and Power: And in the Nature of Things, it must put them above Controul to a great Degree, and create them many Advantages, and Exemptions.—Not to mention, that even their Excesses and Irregularities will find a gentler Treatment on the same Account, than otherwise they would have met with. But alas! all these noble Privileges,*

* Is there any Law now subsisting in this Country, which obliges the Subjects to give an Account of themselves once a Year or oftener, to the public Magistrate? Can you call upon the most suspected Persons to shew how they subsist? What Course of Life they follow? Who are their Acquaintance? And with whom connected? And as to the antient Practice of Decennaries or Tithings, instituted even by ALFRED THE GREAT, when every Man was responsible for the good Behaviour

Privileges, and invaluable Blessings, are *either in themselves* too strong and *excessive* a Potion for their weak Heads to receive, or else *they* are most highly criminal in perverting so rare a Prerogative, peculiar to themselves above *other Nations*, to serve such *bad Ends*, and Purposes.

Behaviour of his *Neighbour*, and consequently had a *Right* to inspect his Actions, and in *some Degree* to *regulate* his Conduct; can this be revived in *modern Times*? And who will *dare* to begin the Experiment? Moreover, in regard to *Church Discipline*, is *this* to be *restored*, or can it be so much as *attempted* in such an Age as *ours*? Persons of *all Ranks* and Conditions are required by the *Laws*, both of Church and State, to *attend* the Service of Almighty God, either in the established Church, or in some Protestant Congregation: They will *not* attend.—They are *required* to receive the Holy Sacrament at least three Times every Year: They will *not* receive.—Parents and Guardians are *required* to bring their Children and Wards, and Masters and Dames to send their Servants and Apprentices, *to be instructed in the Church-Catechism, and the Duties of our Holy Religion*: They will neither bring nor send them. Now *who* is to *compel* these Recusants? Or *how* are they to be *compelled*? And yet this *Want of Discipline* in the Church, and *Want of Police and Subordination* in the State, are Evils which are increasing every Day. In short, the *present Corruption and Degeneracy*, which prevail throughout *all Ranks*, from the highest to the lowest, are but *too easily* accounted for:—Namely, *Liberty and Prosperity* (the two greatest Blessings on Earth) are greatly *abused* in these Times, and are converted by *too many* into Licentiousness, and *the Doing in every Respect whatever is right in their own Eyes*. But alas! who can *prevent* the Mischiefs arising from these Abuses? Or who will *undertake* the Cure?—See my Sermon preached on May 7, 1766, at the yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, published at the Request of the Gentlemen concerned in the said Charity.

For

For so it is, that they turn this their *Liberty into Licentiousness*, and seem to put *no other Value* on it, than as it affords them a Means of daring to do whatsoever they ought not, even "*whatever is right in their own Eyes.*" Nay, when their Extravagances have run to that Height, as to call for *corporal Punishment*, and the Censure of the Magistrate, there are no Hopes, or Prospect of *reclaiming* them by that Means. For they have made it a *Point of Honour* to *outbrave* the Punishment: And as for the Shame and Infamy attending it, these Things make *now* but little Impression on them; so that we have nothing left of *Discipline* in our Places of *Chastisement* and *Confinement*, but their *Names*. For our *Houses of Correction*, as they are called, are so far from answering the *original Ends* of their Institution; that they *corrupt* more than *correct*, and *harden* rather than *reform*; so as to make the *young Offender*, if sent there, to be "*threefold more the Child of Hell, than he was before.*"

AND still the Misfortune is, that *we* cannot, *we* dare not put in Practice those Remedies, which are successful in *foreign Countries*, for Fear of destroying the *Freedom of our Constitution*, and of running into the Jaws of Slavery and *arbitrary Power*. For what is made a constant Rule with *them* in many Particulars, must not be so much as attempted by *us*. Thus, for In-

P

stance,

stance, *we* must not think of lodging *discretionary* Powers with the *Magistrate* to chastise all the Offences of the Populace just as *he* pleases; or to allow him a *Latitude* of interpreting our *penal* Statutes by Parity of Reason. *We* must not have Recourse to *summary* Ways of punishing the guilty; but every Thing must be carried on by the *constitutional* Methods of *slow*, and *formal* Proceffes. And the Office of *Magistracy* itself, must be so defined, and circumscribed by *positive* and *express* Laws, that whosoever exceeds its *Limits*, may be called to an Account for invading, and encroaching on the Liberties of a *free People*.

BESIDES, the Distance, and Awe, which the *Poor abroad* must always observe towards the *Rich*, are a mighty Check on their Passions and Inclinations: They donot feel in themselves that Spirit of Independency, and Contradiction, which hurries *our* Populace on to commit the *most daring* Vices; because they have never been treated otherwise, than as a Set of Beings, who are to obey implicitly the Will and Command of their Superiors. And to maintain this State-liness and Reserve, and to strike the deeper Dread on their Minds, there is invented by their Lords and Masters a very strange Kind of Distinction, which is intended to keep these *two* Conditions of Life for ever separated from each other, and to be a *perpetual Barrier* between *noble* and
ignoble

ignoble Blood. For this Difference, or Discrimination, is made to consist, as much in the Articles of Vice and Pleasure, which are therefore wholly *appropriated* to the Great, and *prohibited* to others, as it doth in Titles, Precedence, and Ensigns of Nobility. So that in Fact, not only the *public* Laws and Authority are a Bridle to the Vulgar, not only the *Good and Virtuous* among their Superiors are a Restraint to their Desires, but even the *Bad, and Immoral* become a Means to prevent any Excesses in their Vassals, and Inferiors, by a *fantastical* Kind of Motive; which tho' highly condemnable in itself, yet is *accidentally* productive of much Good. For the low-born Peasant, the ignoble Labourer, or Mechanick, must not dare to give themselves the Airs of a vicious, a luxurious, or an extravagant Man; that being reserved as a Prerogative fitting only for their *Betters*. Nor would it be deemed less, than an unpardonable Presumption, for the base Vulgar to imitate the Vices and Pleasures of Persons of Quality and Distinction. Add to *all this*, that, whereas in these *Realms of Liberty*, the very meanest cannot be obliged to comply with many Particulars, which are even good and profitable for them, unless it is by their own previous Choice, and free Consent; in *other Regions* their Approbation is never asked, but they are commanded and compelled. Thus, for Example, if among *us* a

Charity School is erected for the Benefit of the Children of the neighbouring Poor, the Parents must be invited, and allured by Motives of Interest and Advantage, and by Dint of Persuasion, to *send* them there to receive Instruction, and may refuse, or detain them at Home, or take them away at Pleasure: Whereas in *many foreign* Protestant Countries, where there are public Schools erected in each District for the *same* good Purpose, *there* the Poor, within its Limits and Jurisdiction, are *obliged* to send their Children, 'till they have received *an Education* sufficient for their Rank and Condition; and *dare not* keep them at Home, on any frivolous Excuses or Pretences, so long as their Presence is required at the School.

Now as *all* these Methods are only calculated for an *absolute* and *despotick* Government, and are for the most Part *impracticable* in *our* Circumstances and State of Things, let us therefore have Recourse to *such only* as are consistent with *our Constitution*, happy on the whole, notwithstanding its Defects; and let us see what their *Force and Influence* might probably be, on the Lives and Morals of our People.

AND among all the *various* Measures, which the Piety of some good Persons have projected, and established of late Years, towards putting a Stop to that Torrent of Vice and Immorality, which has been breaking in on us, perhaps there

is *not one*, which might answer so well in the Event, under proper Management, or which is so promising in Appearance, as this *very Institution* now before us. For this in Effect, comprehends and contains all the Rest; and with peculiar Circumstances of Advantage, and Improvement. It is not only a Receptacle for the Miserable and Distressed, affording them Sustenance, and all probable Means of Relief and Cure, but may likewise be considered as a Reformatory *, or Sort of a *Charity School*, happily adapted to the Case of *adult Persons*, and at *such* a Juncture, when they are the most likely to be susceptible of

* “ The *Benefits of an Infirmary* are not confined to *bodily*
 “ Pains and Sicknefs, but may extend themselves yet further, to the *spiritual* Maladies of those, who are under
 “ the Care of it.—The *Ignorant* here may be instructed, the
 “ *Dissolute* reclaimed, and the *Dead in Trespasses and Sins*,
 “ through the all-powerful Grace of GOD, be raised to the
 “ Life of Righteousness. The *strict Regularity* to which
 “ the Patients are obliged, the *Spiritual Assistance*, which
 “ is charitably administered to them, the *Aptness of their*
 “ *Minds* to receive *religious Impressions* in Time of Sick-
 “ ness and Distress, and the *good Improvement*, which will
 “ be made of it, to the pressing home on them their ever-
 “ *lasting* Concerns, whilst they are *here* in a *suffering and*
 “ *declining* Condition, all contribute to this happy *Change*.
 “ —And who is there, that feels not an *inward Pleasure*
 “ (a Pleasure which must greatly overpay his Liberality)
 “ when he *reflects*, that by a small Benefaction, he may be
 “ happily *instrumental*, not only to the prolonging of a
 “ *mortal Life*, but to the saving of an *immortal Soul*.”—
 See Dr. GREGG’S elegant Sermon, preached at the Opening
 of the Northampton Infirmary, on March 29, 1743.

good

good and virtuous Impressions. Here therefore they may be taught, not indeed Letters, and the Elements of Learning, but what is of more Importance, as well as more proper for their Condition, the Elements of Christianity, and good Morals.

MOREOVER, here likewise we are sure that no Invasion is made on our Liberties, no Encroachments are attempted, nor dangerous Practices pursued, which may become bad Precedents in the Event. For no other Methods *can* be followed on this Plan, but such as are quite consistent with the Genius of the *British* Constitution. There is no Force put on the Candidates for Instruction; no Violence to be offered; but Gentleness and Persuasion are the only Instruments employed to work a Change, and Reformation on them. In short, *in these Places* the Poor are ingenuously dealt with, and as a *free People*. They are obliged to no Rules or Orders, but to what they gave their free Consent before; and have no other Conditions imposed on them, but what they knew, or might have known of, and assented to at the Time of their Admission, which they voluntarily sought, and petitioned for *of themselves*.

AND yet, by thus accustoming them for a Space of Time to Exercises of daily Devotion, to the Reading of good Books, to a sober Diet,
and

[III]

and a regular Behaviour; by affording them the Advice, and Counsel of a Clergyman*, who is to direct their spiritual State, according to every one's Condition and Exigence; who is to call on them to repent of the Evils of their past Life, and to put them in Remembrance, that Sickness and Affliction are God's Visitations, mercifully intended to reclaim them;—who is therefore to exhort them to frequent his holy Ordinances, to think of that Eternity, to which possibly their present Maladies may hasten them, and therefore to strive the more earnestly to make their Calling and Election sure, whilst they have Space given them for Repentance, 'ere the *Night* overtake them, “*when no Man can work;*”—who is moreover to require them in a most special Manner, to express the deepest Sense of Gratitude both to God and Man, for the Good, which is tendered to them by Means of this charitable Establishment, both for their *Souls*, and for their *Bodies*; and who is likewise to present them with such small Tracts on their Recovery, and at their Departure, as may tend to *confirm* any good Notions, or Im-

* At the Bristol Infirmary, and I presume at every other, Care is taken, that Patients of *all Persuasions* may be attended, if they desire it, by a Minister of *their own*.

pressions.

pressions they may have received; and who is to accompany these with private Instructions and seasonable Admonitions of his own:--I say, by the *joint* Efficacy of *these Means*, with the Divine Blessing on them, we may reasonably promise to ourselves, that such good Principles and holy Resolutions will be formed within them, as may take deep Root downward, and plentifully bear Fruit upward, so as to become the happy Beginnings of a *national* Reformation.—Or, if this is too sanguine an Expectation, we may at least humbly hope, that in some Instances the Heart will be so prepared by Sickness and Affliction, joined to all these *other* Helps and Assistances, as to be rendered good to the End of their Days, that so the Seed of the Word may bring forth Fruit to eternal Life.

AND yet we need not be so very languid in our Hopes, and Expectations, when we consider how *numerous* these pious Foundations are *now* grown, and how *many* Infirmarys have been established of late Years in the most *conspicuous* and *populous* Parts of the Kingdom: For if we reflect, what *great Numbers* of Patients are received into, and discharged from, *each* within the Compass of a Year, why may we not have a rational and well-grounded Assurance, with the Blessing of God, that the *good Influence* of this Sort of Education will extend more and more
every

every Day, so as to become *at last*, in a great Degree, general and universal?

MOREOVER, *another Motive* for us to hope well, as to this Affair, may be drawn from the *Nature* of the Books, and Tracts they are encouraged, and invited to peruse: For, seeing they must have so much *leisure* Time on their Hands, which they know not well how to employ but by reading *themselves*, or being the Hearers of those who can; *particular* Care has been taken both to *prevent* their being tainted with lewd, or immoral Treatises, and to *provide* them with such *only*, as may profit them, by which they may be improved in all holy Conversation, and Godliness;---such as may inspire them with *just*, and *genuine* Notions of *true* Christianity: *Genuine* as it proceeded from the Divine Author of it, and his inspired Apostles, before it was adulterated with any Mixture of Party-spirit, or Superstition, of enthusiastic Flights, Bigotry, or blind Zeal;—such therefore, as may fix their Attention to the *main*, and *fundamental* Principles of Faith and Practice; and may interest them in no *other* Sort of Dispute or Controversy, but of *that* which CHRIST will have at the last Day, with those “*who cried, “ Lord, Lord, but did not the Things, which he “ commanded;*”—such, in short, which mention *no other* Kind of Distinction or Division among Christians, but of *that*, which they *ought* to

Q

know

know, and always bear in Mind,* namely, between the *good* and the *bad*, between the *nominal* and the *real* Professors of the Gospel of CHRIST.

THERE is likewise one *additional* Motive, blessed be GOD, to hope the best concerning the Progress of this Work: And that is, that in *this Respect*, and as Contributors to *this excellent* Charity, we do not defeat by *our own Example*, what we would recommend by our *Words*, and *Professions*:---Nay, that we can here appeal to the *Goodness* of it, and with a becoming Modesty, *propose* it, as a Pattern worthy of the *Imitation* of those below us. For surely, they can learn no Ill from hence; and in *this* Instance at least,

* Among other little Treatises of this Kind, Dr. STONHOUSE'S *Friendly Advice to a Patient, with spiritual Directions for the Uninstructed*, (Price 6d.) is designed more particularly for the Use of the Sick, belonging to the Infirmarys, is given away at several of them, by the Governors to the Patients, and is adopted into the Number of those Books, which the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge disperse, as properly calculated for the Advancement and Revival of true Religion, and may be had on the Terms of the Society at half Price by any of the subscribing Members.—Bishop GIBSON'S *Serious Advice to Persons lately recovered from Sickness*, (Price One Penny) is likewise given away at many Infirmarys, to such Patients as have received a Cure there, and may be had on the Terms of the aforesaid Society.—The Bishop of Sodor and Man's *Knowledge and Practice of Christianity, made easy to the meanest Capacities*, is a very useful Book for the common People, and fit to lay in the Wards of an Infirmary, but as the Price of it, (even on the Society's Terms) is *Eighteen-pence*, it is too expensive to be given away to the Patients, as the others are.

our *Practice* does not tend to *corrupt*, but to *reform* them. They can see nothing in this whole Affair, which will countenance them to be either irreligious or superstitious, to be avaricious or profuse, insolent or ungrateful, cruel or imperious, improvident or intemperate; or, in short, to be in *any* Respect, otherwise than tender-hearted, loving, and compassionate, delighting in doing good, frugal, honest, and industrious, affable and courteous to their fellow Creatures, and Lovers of God.

BUT then, after all that has been said of the good Tendency of the Institution for promoting the Interests of Religion and Morality, it is to be understood with *this Limitation*, that *every* Thing else is made *subservient* to this good, and general Design. Otherwise, if *any other* Part or Branch of the Establishment, is permitted to counter-act or undermine it, we can expect but *little* Success or Advantage to attend it: --Nay, we may have *Cause* to fear, that what may spring from this *internal* and *latent* Evil, may greatly overbalance all the Good, and convert an Institution, which might be serviceable to Piety and Virtue, into a loathsome Sink of Vice and Impurity. And therefore there can never be kept too watchful an Eye over the *Management* of the Charity, as to *these* Particulars. We can never be too solicitous, not only that the Funds of the House be properly applied, not only that Temperance,

Frugality, and Neatness be constantly kept up, but *more especially* that *Decency* and *Modesty* be uniformly preserved; that *none* be allowed to take any *undue Liberties*, or unbecoming Freedoms;---that no Familiarities be permitted,---no obscene Talking or "*filthy Jestings, which are not convenient*;"---and in short, that nothing be done by *any one* concerned, which shall trespass on the Rules of a *virtuous, chaste, and modest* Deportment. Thus it behoves us to be always *on the Watch*, and to guard against an Evil, which perhaps, as yet, never has existed;---and I hope never will. But nevertheless, the *Caution* may not be *altogether unnecessary*, as *all human* Things are apt to *degenerate* in a Course of Time, unless *narrowly* observed; and as a *Prevention*, is ever preferable to a *Cure*.

ON the whole therefore, by being duly circumspect in *these*, and *such like* Particulars, and by keeping up to the Spirit of the Institution, we may with humble Assurance confide in the Divine Favour to prosper the Undertaking, and hope to see a *sensible Reformation*. And, tho' the *Expectations* of Mankind (as hath been before acknowledged) are perhaps generally *more sanguine*, than the Event will warrant, yet it is surely a *Comfort* inexpressibly great, to be the *Instruments* of doing what *Good we can*, tho' it should not amount to *so much*, as we could wish; to be, I say, the *Means of saving some*, tho' others should

should still continue averse, "*to the Things which make for their Peace,*" and deaf to all Admonition and Reproof.

AND therefore, if so, if on the *lowest* Computation, the *Good* hence arising is very *great* and *considerable*, is the *best* and most *diffusive* in its *Consequences*, as well as the most *noble* and *heavenly* in its *Nature*, let us indulge ourselves in dwelling a while on the pleasing Idea, which this Scene of Things presents to our View: Let us consider, that in every Point of Light, whether with regard to the Concerns of *this* World, or of a *better*, we have *Cause* to rejoice, and delight in the Contemplation.

FOR, if there is any Happiness in Society, any Felicity in the secure Enjoyment of our Rights and Properties, any Preference in being conversant among an honest and conscientious People, whose *Word*, and *Services* may be depended on, who are all industrious in their several Callings, and who *by these Means* largely contribute to the Riches and Strength, the Power and Tranquility of the Community; ---we know, and are well assured, that these Things *wholly* depend on the *Manners*, and *Morals* of the People, and are *best* promoted by their living a godly, righteous, and sober Life.

BUT above all, what a delightful Meditation is it to the *pious* and *devout* Christian to reflect, that his *Services* become, through the Divine Appoint-

Appointment, *any Ways instrumental* in the great Work of *saving the Soul*, and “*of turning many unto Righteousness!*” What Joy and Satisfaction must he receive in observing, that his Services are made the *Means* of rescuing the most precious and immortal Part of human Nature, from the Jaws of Hell, and the Power of the Devil! — The *Means* of fitting it for endless and exquisite Felicity, of freeing it from the Bondage of Corruption, and of preparing it to enter into “*the glorious Liberty of the Children of God!*” And what a Pleasure is it to him still to contemplate, that this Employment is not only so noble, so generous, and godlike *in itself*, but shall be rewarded also with the *highest* and most *distinguished* Happiness in a *future State*! That it shall receive the Applauses of Angels and Archangels, and of all the blessed Inhabitants of the Realms of Light! And that the great God himself will *discriminate* those, who are thus employed, with a *particular* Approbation, and will “*cause them to shine forth as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever!*”

LASTLY, when we consider the *present* Situation of our Affairs, we have yet this *further* Comfort and Encouragement, that *such a Reformation* in our People would greatly conduce, not only to draw down the *divine* Favour and Protection, and to place us under the more *immediate* Care of God’s *good Providence*, (which Blessings are
always

always found to be Attendants on *national Virtue*; but also, according to the Rules of *worldly Wisdom*, and in Point of *human Prudence*, I say, it would greatly conduce to *secure our Constitution* both in *Church and State*, and to *preserve* it from any Attempts, or Invasions for the future. For after all, it is *Religion* only, which can inspire the *Bulk* of a People with a truly *heroic* and *martial* Spirit. And it was never known, that a pious, moral, and conscientious Commonalty were *Dastards* and *Cowards*, or *false* and *treacherous* in the Trust reposed in them: Whereas, on the other Hand, it has always been observed, that a Race of Men sunk in Vice, corrupted by Luxury, and effeminated by Debauchery, and without the *Principles* of *Honesty* and *Honour*, could be but *little* depended on, in Times of public Danger and Distress. Nay, I shall observe further, that a Spirit of *Religion*, or *Enthusiasm* (call it which you will, it matters not in the present Case; for some Sorts of *Enthusiasm* are not *wrong*, if properly *governed* and *directed*) I say, that *such a Spirit* is a Kind of Succedaneum for the *Want* of *military Skill* and *Discipline*, by supplying Men with invincible Firmness and Patience, with a Readiness to receive Advice and Direction, together with a Desire of sacrificing every private Animosity to the *common Cause*?---And what is still more, it inspires them with that *Kind* of Courage, which yields.

yields not to Hunger, Diseases, and incessant Toil; and which nothing but Religion can inspire.---It is true, *animal Spirits*, and *mechanic Skill* and *Dexterity*, will go a great Way in the *Day of Battle*, where the Point is soon to be decided: But there is no Support, like that of *Zeal* and *Principle*, to make the *Soldiery* bear up against *long* and *consuming Fatigues*, against *Sicknesses*, *Famine*, and the *Disparity* of Numbers. *Here, here*, it is, that *Religion alone* must operate and take Place; *here* it displays a manifest Superiority: And in *such* Circumstances, the Difference soon appears between *that* Courage which is founded on Notions of *Duty* and *Conscience*, and the Courage of *animal Spirits*, and *bodily Constitution*.

THUS then it appears from *all*, which has been said, both how serviceable and conducive this Institution is in itself to the Purposes of Religion and Virtue, and a national Reformation; and how necessary and highly expedient it is upon *many* Accounts, that something of this Kind should at last be attempted.——

BUT still, what is a *peculiar* Happiness in the *present* Case, and what gives a *double* Satisfaction, greatly adding to the Recommendation of the Thing, is, that it no Ways clashes or interferes with the *original* and more *immediate* View, and Design of the Establishment. The Prescriptions for the Diseases, and the Operations of Surgery,

are by no Means retarded or defeated by the Patients being instructed in the Duties of their Religion, and exhorted “*to have their Conversation, as becometh the Gospel of Christ.*” Nor can the Cure of the Diseases pertaining to the *Soul*, be any Hindrance or Impediment to the good Design of administering Remedies against the Maladies of the *Body*.—Nay, we may rather affirm, that the *one* is greatly facilitated and promoted by the *other*; inasmuch as the Virtues of Patience and Contentment, of Sobriety and Perseverance, which it is the *peculiar* Business of *Religion* to excite and cultivate, are extremely serviceable in *all* bodily Complaints, and in *some* are, *of themselves, half* the Cure.

WHAT then can be said too highly in Commendation of *such* an Institution, in which so many good Designs all *centre* in perfect *Harmony*? And what *other* Establishment is yet known in the World, which can urge such a *Variety of Motives* in its Favour, as this; and *all* of them too of such *great* Weight and Importance? For, whether we consider it in its *primary*, or its *secondary* Point of View, as an *Infirmity* for the Cure and Relief of the helpless and laborious Poor, or as a *Reformatory*, or *School of Christian Discipline*, and a *Nursery* of true Religion, it may in *either* of these Representations, be conceived to be capable of making a *distinct*, and *particular* Application to Per-

R

sons

sons of *almost all* Complexions, Characters, and Dispositions, to join *their* Assistance to *ours* in this good Work, "*and Labour of Love.*" Wherefore let me humbly *ask*, Is it *Goodness* and *Humanity*, which can move you most to assist in such an Undertaking? Is it a *Sympathy*, and tender *Feeling* for the Anguish and Distress of our Fellow-Creatures;---a Desire to *imitate* that gracious *Being*, whose Mercies are over all his Works; and to *obey* those his Commands, which require us to be merciful and compassionate ourselves to the Sick and Needy? Or is it perhaps a Principle of *Justice* and *Equity*, which affects us most; a Sense, that it is *fitting* and *right* to return something to the Poor by Way of *Compensation* for the Inequality of our Possessions, and of making some *Reparation* for the Injuries they may have suffered, and the Diseases *contracted*, when drudging on *our* Account?---Or suppose, that *prudential Considerations* shall determine our Assent, and *dispose* our Charity; *dispose* it, I say, where most Good may be done in the most *effectual* Manner;---where *Idleness* and *Imposture* may be sure of being *detected*;---where *Industry* may be *encouraged* (by which the *Burden* of the Poor may be *lessened*)--where skilful Physicians and Surgeons, may be trained up in the *Knowledge* and *Cure* of Diseases?---Or shall we consider the Institution in its *secondary View*; and therefore, shall the *more worthy* Motives of

Piety.

Piety and Devotion, and a Zeal for the Honour and Propagation of Religion, have their proper Sway?---And are we then desirous to save a Soul from Death, to convert the Wicked from the Error of his Ways,-- and to cover a Multitude of Sins?---Or will nothing else but temporary and political Considerations be the chief Inducement? Shall Maxims of Trade and Commerce, the Price of Labour, and a Love for the Constitution and Liberties of our Country have the more powerful Ascendant? I must then, in ALL THESE supposed Cases (and many others too tedious here to mention) humbly beg Leave to remind you, that the present Charity has a just Claim to your Alms and Benevolence, and a real Plea for it. And may we not modestly remonstrate, that among so many Motives, it would be hard, very hard, if none of them could prevail on those, who are able to contribute in a greater, or less Degree, towards the carrying on a Design so universally good and beneficial? And what if the Luxuries and Superfluities of Life were a little retrenched on these Accounts? What if a Scene of Pleasure and Diversion was sometimes forborn, and the Expences of it appropriated to this benevolent Design? Surely this would be no great Diminution of any one's State and Condition. And there is scarcely any one in almost ever so low a Station, but might spare something in these Respects; and so spare it, as not to cause any sen-

sible Difference in his *usual* Manner of living. For, as to the *little* Matter of *Self-denial* to be practised on such an Occasion, surely it is not worth the mentioning, in Comparison of that real and solid *Satisfaction*, which every one must feel in reflecting on the *Nature*, and *Tendency* of the good and virtuous Action he has done, and on the Reward, which is promised to attend it.

AND now suffer me to intreat *your Patience* for a few Moments longer, whilst I address myself to *that Part* of my Audience, who either *have been*, or *may be* the Objects of this Charity.

To you therefore, my poor Brethren, I now turn, and with all Zeal, and Affection apply myself.—Be assured, it was not with a Design of doing you *any Disservice*, it was not to keep you still *poor* and *low*, that I compelled myself to mention many harsh and disagreeable Truths concerning the State of the Morals of *too many* among you. No! It was *solely* intended for *your Good*, for your *temporal* and *eternal* Welfare, to raise you *above* your *present* Condition even in *this* Life, and to *exalt* you to the *highest* Glories in the *next*. And as to what has been said, ye yourselves can bear me Witness, that *too much* of it is undoubtedly true, from *your own* Knowledge and Observation. How *much* of your Time and Money is *unnecessarily* trifled away! To what Excesses of Riot and Debauchery do some of you

you run! How are all our *tippling*, and *infamous* Houses in every *manufacturing* Place, in every populous Town or City, *multiplied* and *increased* of late? And to what *can* that be owing, but to the *Encouragement* they receive from you? It is you, who maintain and support these Places: By you they thrive and flourish: These are the Haunts continually frequented, whilst *honest* Trade and Manufacture are every where *declining*; whilst the *Shop*, and the *Workhouse* are *neglected* and *forsaken*. And, oh! that by *Repentance* you would wipe off the Reproach,---these are the Places, to which (*more especially* every Lord's Day) vast Concourses of People are observed to flock; where *Swearing* and *Cursing*, where *lewd* Talking, and *filthy* Jestings are perpetually heard, and where the Gains of the Week are consumed in unlawful Games, and Pastimes, and by Actions still more criminal.

AND what shall I say to our *Mariners* and *Seamen*?---Miserable indeed is that strange Spirit of *mad* Extravagance, which seems to have totally *possessed* and *infatuated* them! Why are they in such *Haste* to *squander* away what they have been so long in earning, and dearly purchased at the Hazard of their Lives:—But, alas! Is it not evident, that they *profusely* and *wantonly* throw it away, as if the whole Pleasure of spending their Money, consisted in doing it as *speedily*, as *foolishly*, and as *wickedly* as they could possibly devise?

MORE-

MOREOVER, how thoughtless and improvident is the *Labourer* and *Manufacturer*; inasmuch as in Times of Plenty, or when Work may be procured, and Trade is flourishing, he seldom or ever lays up against a Time of *Sickness*, or *Scarcity*, or *Deadness* of Employ? And would you know, my poor Brethren, once for all, what is the *Cause*, that you often find such a Stop to Business, and a Stagnation to Trade? Why, it is really this, that you do not labour *as cheap*, and are not content to live and fare *as hard*, as the Manufacturers in *other* Countries: And consequently *their* Merchants can afford to sell their Goods at the Market *cheaper* than *ours*. And *this* you may perceive to be *true*, by what you experience *yourselves*. For you may observe, that when any of *their* Workmen and Manufacturers remove *hither*, they find *constant* Employ by Means of working *cheaper*, and are able to support *themselves* and Families by that *Pittance of Wages*, which you would not think worth the regarding. For alas! (and this is the Ruin of all our *Trade*!) *too many* there are, who will not accept of Work *one Part* of the Week, but on such Terms *only* as may enable them to live in Vice and Idleness *the Rest*. Nay, how often has it been remarked, that *those* amongst you, who get *most*, have the *least* to carry Home at the Week's End, for the Support of themselves and Families? These Things are much to be lamented!

lamented! In this you are worse, *much worse*, than the common People of any other Nation.---

"Turn ye, turn ye therefore from your evil Ways :

"For why will ye die, (why will ye ruin both

"Soul and Body) O House of Israel?"

INDEED when I thus speak of the *Generality* among you, it is but Justice to except *all those* who have *not* run into the same Excess of Riot. For doubtless there are *many* yet remaining, *"who have escaped the Pollutions of the World,*
"through the Knowledge of the Lord and Saviour
"Jesus Christ;" And who set a good *Example* to others, would they follow it, *"in the Midst of a*
"crooked and perverse Generation." May they therefore still *"go on from Strength to Strength,"* and *"not be weary of well-doing!"* May they still continue to *"fight the good Fight, and to*
"keep the Faith, 'till they finish their Course ; that
"so at the last they may lay hold on eternal Life,
"and receive that Crown of Righteousness, which
"the Lord the righteous Judge will give to all
"those, who love his appearing."

AND as for others, who are yet *"in the Gall*
"of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity," oh! let them consider betimes, what will be the fatal *End* of these Things.—Let them seriously lay to Heart, how many Calls and Invitations they have daily had to Repentance and Amendment of Life? How many *additional* Motives they now enjoy by Means of *this very* Institution?---

And

And if *all* is to no Purpose, if they *still* continue *hardened* and *impenitent*, deaf to every Intreaty and Admonition, what an *accumulated* Load of Guilt will they *one Day* have to answer for! And how shall they be able to look that incensed and terrible Judge in the Face, "*who will render to every Man according to his Works.*"

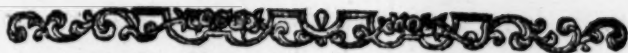
PARTICULARLY let me call on *all such*, as have ever received the Benefit of *this Charity*, never to forget the *Design* and *Intention* of it. And especially let me beseech you, that, as ye were obliged, when *Patients* in the Infirmary, to conform to its Rules, to live a regular and a sober Life, to abstain from all sensual and wicked Courses, to join in daily Prayers and Acts of Devotion, to *read* good Books, or to *hear* them *read*, to behave with Submission towards your Superiors, and with Kindness and Affection towards your Equals; let me, I say, beseech you, by the Mercies of God, and for the Sake of your own precious and immortal Souls, that ye still *continue* in the good Things ye have learnt, and not fall back into *Sin* and *Perdition*. Be not ye therefore, like the ungrateful *Lepers*, who, after their Cure, "*were not found to have returned Thanks unto God:*"---But rather let your future Conversation plainly shew, that "*ye, who were sometimes Darknefs, are now become Light in the Lord.*" Walk therefore as the Children of the
Light;

Light; and resolve, by the Grace of GOD, to renounce for the future, “*the hidden, and unprofitable Works of Darkneſs.*”

AND in *ſo* doing (let me add it for your *Comfort* and *Encouragement*) ye will greatly promote, even the *temporal* and *worldly* Interests, both of yourselves and Families: For *Godlineſs* hath the Promise of *this Life*, as well as of *that better*, which is to come.---Likewiſe in *ſo* doing, ye will have made all the *Returns*, which we deſire, or expect at your Hands; and will be juſtly entitled to our *future Favour* and real *Eſteem*:---But, what is of *infinitely more* Importance to you, than *all* beſides, in *ſo* doing you will procure the *Friendſhip* and *Favour* of *Almighty God*, who will *bleſs* all your *honeſt* Endeavours in *this Life*, if that be found moſt *conducive* to your *true Welfare*; or however that may be, will infallibly crown you with *Glory* and *Happineſs*, and *Immortality* in the *Life to come*.

AND as to you, my Brethren, and *Fellow Contributors* in this good Work, “*and Labour of Love,*” what ſhall I ſay more, or what can I add, but my ſincere *Wiſhes*, and fervent *Prayers*, that GOD would “*cauſe the Work to proſper in our Hands?*” And let us *all* join together in beſeeching him, that as he has uſed us to be his *Inſtruments* “*in planting and watering, he himſelf would give the Increaſe.*”—Let us moreover humbly beg, in *Relation* to
S
ourſelves,

ourselves, that he would endue us with such a Measure of his *Holy Spirit*, and cause us *so* to walk in all holy Conversation, and Godliness, that the *rest* of our Lives may be consistent with *this*; that we may *zealously* endeavour to keep the *whole* Law, and to be "*perfect* in every good Word, and Work:"—And to conclude all, that whilst we thus do *Good to others*, and labour after *their* Conversion, "*we ourselves be not Castaways.*"



S E R M O N VII.

I TIMOTHY iv.---8.

*—Godliness is profitable unto all Things,
having the Promise of the Life that now
is, and of that which is to come.*



THE Term *Godliness* is here used to signify the whole of Religion: And when Religion is taken in a general View, it implies two Things: 1st, A Rule of Life to regulate our Thoughts and Behaviour during our Abode in this World; and, 2dly, A System of Belief, on which to ground our Expectations of Happiness hereafter.

Now Religion, considered as a System of Belief for the Purposes of a future State, must necessarily take in the Christian Plan of Redemption, and the Forgiveness of Sins thro' the Blood of Christ;---because we can have no Hopes of future Happiness 'till we have Hopes of Pardon. And as Mankind are all Sinners,

some Scheme of Reconciliation must first take Effect, before we can pretend to look up for Rewards, and enjoy the Prospects of immortal Glory. Now the Christian Plan of Redemption and Reconciliation is the only one which can give Satisfaction in this interesting Point: Because it exhibits the only Means whereby Sinners are assured of Pardon; nay it explains the Method how it comes to pass that their imperfect Services are entitled to the highest Rewards. Therefore *Godliness*, or Religion in this Sense, is peculiarly profitable, as doing that which no other System can do, by opening to our View the Glories of an immortal State, and encouraging us to aspire after them with a reasonable and well-grounded Confidence of Success.

BUT Religion, considered merely as a Rule of Life, has nothing in it, which is peculiarly Christian:---My Meaning is, that it would have been incumbent on us to have performed the same Duties, as far as we could have discovered them, tho' the Christian Revelation had never been vouchsafed. But it must be always acknowledged, with great Thankfulness, that Divine Revelation has stated and explained these Duties in the most clear and forcing Manner, and recommended them to us by such *new* and *additional* Motives as never could have been conceived

conceived or thought of, without the Light of Revelation.

THUS therefore it appears, that the Christian Revelation is both a Rule of Life for this World, and a System of Reconciliation and Happiness for the next. And the Words of the Text very emphatically comprehend them both ;—Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having the Promise of the Life that now is, as well as that which is to come.---My chief Business at present shall be, to consider Religion as a *Christian* Rule of Living, and to observe the Influence and Effect it was intended to have on all the Parts of human Conduct.

As a Rule of Life,---it must consist in the due Regulation of our Passions and Enjoyments: or, in other Words, it must direct every Movement, Appetite, or Inclination, to a right End, and superintend the Gratification of our Desires, so as that they may never exceed their due Bounds. Human Nature is composed of two distinct Principles, *Reason* and *Inclination*; Reason to direct and guide, and Inclination to impel and move us towards different Objects. When these two concur, then the Christian Rule is exemplified by a Christian Practice; but when they differ, the Law in the Members warreth against the Law in the Mind, and brings the Slave of his Passions into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in his Members.

Now

Now as *Inclination* may be considered as a general Term for all the various Passions existing in Human Nature, it deserves our Notice, that when any of these Passions are placed on lawful and innocent Objects, and gratified in a moderate Degree,---such Gratifications are rightly called *innocent Pleasures*, or *lawful Enjoyments*. And under this Class we are to comprehend all the innocent Recreations, Emoluments, and Conveniences of the present Life.

BUT when any of our Passions are of a *moral* Nature, and immediately tend to moral Objects, God, or Man,---then the *right* Exercise of such Passions is properly termed *Moral Virtue*, or the Duties of natural Religion. Therefore Piety towards God, Benevolence, Justice, Charity, and Compassion towards Man, are all the Products of this religious Exercise, and virtuous Application of our Passions.

BUT when we take into the Account the *superior* Motives and *additional* Obligations of the Gospel, together with the Helps and Assistances thereby communicated to the Faithful in Christ; that is, when we consider ourselves as living according to the Christian Rule, and actuated by the Power and Spirit of Christianity,---Then these moral Virtues rise in Estimation, and become dignified with the honourable Appellation of *Christian Graces*. And as they are the genuine Effects and Products of the Holy Spirit,
first

first enabling, and then concurring with our own Endeavours, they are in the Scripture Language emphatically stiled, The Fruits of the Spirit: The very Catalogue of which Fruits, as given us by *St. Paul*, doth plainly shew, that they are no other than the above-mentioned moral Virtues spiritualized and improved, by the superior Advantages of the Christian Dispensation. Now the Fruits of the Spirit, saith the Apostle, are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance; against which there is no Law: And I will add, if there is no Law of God against them, every Law and Ordinance of Man, if it was only for the Sake of the present Happiness of Mankind, should tend to cherish and promote them.

On the other Hand, every irregular Indulgence of our Appetites and Passions, is a Vice---a Crime---and a Sin: A personal Vice, as regarding ourselves, a Crime against Society, and a Sin against God. And in Proportion as every Offender acts against superior Light and Conviction, in that Proportion his Guilt is aggravated, and his Punishment will be the greater in a future State. Now these criminal Gratifications, or rather these wicked Perversions of the natural Desires of Mankind, are characterized by the above-mentioned Apostle, as the Works
of

of the Flesh ; a Manner of Expression by which he would signify their great Contrariety to the Spirit of the Gospel : And indeed the very Recital of them is sufficient to convince us, that they are in direct Opposition to the Christian Plan. For Example, The Works of the Flesh, saith he, are manifest, which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Lasciviousneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Hereſies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and the like to these. And then he goes on to inform us, that such wicked Works are not only repugnant to Christianity as a *Rule of Life*, not only contrary to that profitable Godlineſs, to which pertain the Promises even of the Life that now is, but he also shews, that they are an utter Disqualification for obtaining the Pardon of God hereafter, and the Happiness of the World to come. For these are the Apostle's Words, ' ---Of the which I tell you before, as I have
' also told you in Time past, that they which
' do such Things, shall not inherit the Kingdom
' of God.'

UPON the whole, when we consider the Nature of Man, and compare it with the *Christian Rule* intended for his Guidance and Direction, the Designs of Providence appear in the most amiable Light, manifesting themselves to
be

be the Effects of infinite Benevolence, conducted by infinite Wisdom. They all tend to promote Peace on Earth; they are all calculated to make Mankind happy in themselves, and in each other: And as far as any Man, in the general Course of Things, or any Society of Men, pursue this Divine Plan, so far will they find, that Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having the Promise of the Life that now is, as well as that which is to come. So true therefore is that Observation of the wisest of Men, That Righteousness exalteth a Nation,---whereas Sin is a Reproach to any People.

BUT if Christianity is so excellent a Rule for the Conduct of human Life, it may be asked, What is Civil Government?—For that doubtless is a Rule as well as the other, and a Rule plainly designed for regulating the Behaviour of Mankind. The great Question therefore is, Do these Rules clash with each other? Or do they coincide?—If they clash, then Mankind are subject to contrary Directions at the same Time; but if they coincide, it may be worth our while to observe, how far the one is the Friend and Associate of the other.

Now the great End of Government is to promote the Good and Happiness of the Governed: And if you ask, How is this to be done? I will answer, That this is best effected by causing each Individual to conduct himself in such a Manner,

T

as

as shall contribute to the general Good ; and by protecting those that so behave from the Fraud or Violence of others. And what is this, but Religion appearing under another Shape ? Religion is the Basis, Civil Government is the Superstructure ; and neither can be completely established, without the friendly Assistance and helping Hand of the other.

BUT having got thus far, we are yet to observe, that according to these Descriptions, the present Life is to be a busy and an active Scene : Every Man is to move in one Sphere or other, and none to remain in an inactive State : For our Passions are not to be annihilated, but to be properly employed ; and it is the great Concern both of Religion and Government to see, that they are employed in such a Manner as shall be most conducive to the Happiness of the Individual, and of the Public together. But perhaps it may be asked, what Materials are there for this general Employment of Mankind ? And how are Men to fulfil such Demands, which both Religion and Government make upon them ?

THIS is a very interesting and important Question ; and yet when we consider the Nature of it, the Answer is suggested by itself : For what universal Employment can there be ? What *general* Rule can we pursue for the *mutual* Benefit of Mankind ? And how are the Ends both of
Re-

Religion and Government to be answered, but by the System of universal Commerce?—Commerce, I mean, in the large and extensive Signification of that Word; Commerce, as it implies a general System for the useful Employment of our Time; as it exercises the particular Genius and Abilities of Mankind in some Way or other, either of Body or Mind, in mental or corporeal Labour, and so as to make Self-interest and Social coincide. And in pursuing this Plan, it answers all the great Ends both of Religion and Government; it creates social Relations, it enables Men to discharge their Duty in those Relations, and it serves as a Cement to connect together the Religious and Civil Interests of Mankind. It is a Friend to both, when rightly understood, and is befriended by them.

AND thus I have endeavoured to proceed, Step by Step, in tracing the several Links of this universal Chain: We must consider Things apart; we have no Capacities to take in *one universal Whole*; nor is it the Province of human Nature to see every Part of the grand Machine in Motion at once. But even these transient and imperfect Surveys of the Designs of Providence, as exemplified in the Christian Plan, are enough to fill us with the most awful Impressions of that Being, whose Mercies are over all his Works, and whose continued Aim

in every Instance, is to pronounce the Good and Happiness of his Creatures.

Now to strengthen these Reflections, and at the same Time to illustrate what has been said in general by particular Instances, I would beg Leave to offer the following Observations :

1. A *leading* Idea in Religion, considered as a Rule of Life, is,---Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them ; for, we are told by the greatest of Authorities, that this is the *Law* and the *Prophets*. And indeed upon the very mentioning of the Maxim, we can distinctly perceive, that it is the Foundation, not only of distributive Justice, but of universal Benevolence, of Charity, Clemency, Compassion,---and, above all, of Liberty of Conscience. Apply now this Maxim to the Affairs of Government, and see the Effects of it, were it universally to take Place.---Liberty would then subsist without Licentiousness ; Subordination would be preserved without Tyranny or Oppression ; and both the *Governors* and *Governed* would in all Respects be the safer, the better, the happier for each other. Apply it in the next Place to the System of Commerce ; and then Monopolies and Exclusions would immediately be at an End ;---a general Encouragement would be given to the Diligent and Industrious of all Professions ; a general Emulation would excite their Genius and improve their

their Abilities; and every Man would find his own Account in doing to his Neighbour, as he wishes to be done to himself.

2. A leading Idea in *Government* is, that it should always operate as a Terror to Evil Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well. Apply therefore this Principle to the Concerns of Religion, considered as a Rule of Life; and I ask, Can you desire a better Friend to Religion than the Magistrate is, when thus discharging his Office? Can you have your sacred Rule of Life better enforced than by him, whose Sword of Justice is to co-operate with you in making the great Truths of Religion become profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness?---Apply likewise the same Principle to the Plan of Commerce; and let the Evil-Doers be terrified, and those that do well be praised. Now can this hurt Commerce? Can this be a Check to Industry, Frugality, honest Labour, and useful Employment?---No: So far from it, that it encourages and promotes them all: Nay, by encouraging Industry, it encourages Expence; that Kind of Expence which *ought* to be encouraged; the Expence which consists in, and arises from, the Exchange of the Labour and Industry of one Man for the Labour and Industry of another, whereby both are benefited, the Wants of both are supplied, and social Life is refined and improved.

3. A

3. A leading Idea in Commerce is, that every Man should be allowed, and even encouraged to be industrious in all such Ways as will serve himself and the Public together. This is called the Freedom of Commerce; and this is the Foundation both of private Industry, and of national Prosperity and universal Plenty. And can such a Maxim, think you be contradictory to the Interests of sound Religion? can it clash with the sacred Rule of Life already laid down for the Government of the Passions, and the Regulation of human Conduct? No, by no Means: For when you apply this Maxim to Religion, you will find, that it both keeps the Thoughts and Time of Mankind *properly employed* (an Affair of infinite Consequence to Morality and Virtue) and also enables Men to do Good to others, whilst they are doing Good to themselves. It enlarges the Sphere of social Duties, and puts men in a Capacity of doing great Good many Times, even without personal Expence; and of contributing largely and charitably where such Expences are necessary. Lastly, should you apply the same leading Idea to the Concerns of Government, you must see, you cannot help observing, that civil Government cannot make any tolerable Figure upon any other Plan. For Government is the Union of the Interests of all the Individuals in one common Center; and if one Part of the Society is restrained

restrained by the other from being useful to the Community, the whole must suffer; and Tyranny and Oppression, Poverty and Slavery, more or less, must unavoidably take Place,

AND now, after having given these particular Instances, as Illustrations of the general Doctrine, I would beg Leave to conclude with a few short Remarks.

1. IF these three Systems of Religion, Government, and Commerce, are only so many Parts of one general Plan, it is very evident, that when we come to examine any particular Institution in one of them, it cannot be right if it plainly is found to be repugnant to either of the others. Thus, for Example, That System of Religion which is contradictory to good Government, and to the Plan of lasting and extensive Commerce, cannot be the true one, however specious: It cannot be the right Method of moderating our Passions, of regulating our Behaviour, and employing our Time;---because the Works of God are all uniform, all profitable to Mankind, and cannot contradict one another.

THAT System of Government, which is repugnant to the Interests of true Religion, or to the general Plan of Commerce, must be wrong in its own Nature; because we know, that were it right, it would be assisting to both, instead of opposing them.

THAT

THAT System of Commerce, which is built upon Principles subversive of Religion and Virtue, and detrimental to the great Ends of Government, cannot be the just and proper Commercial System: It must be a Deception; and it doth not, it cannot circulate the Labour and Industry of Mankind as much as it ought to do: It is not so lasting, or so extensive in its Consequences, as it might have been; and tho' Individuals may be Gainers by it, yet, upon the whole, it will be found to be as much repugnant to the trading Interests of Mankind, to the right Employment of their Time, and to national Wealth, Plenty, and Prosperity, as it is repugnant to Religion, and Civil Government.

2. HENCE we may learn to suspect the Truth of those popular Cries and Clamours relating to Religion, Government, or Commerce with which the Artful and Designing too successfully impose upon the Weakness and Credulity of Mankind. Sometimes the Church is said to be in Danger,---sometimes the State,---and sometimes our Commerce: And yet, certain it is, that neither the one nor the other can be in Danger, whilst the main Principles and Foundations of all the three remain entire and untouched; and while each is made to co-operate in supporting and promoting the other. This, God be praised, is greatly our Case at present: I

mean

mean it is more so than ever it was in former Times, or is now in other States or Kingdoms. Therefore Men may alarm themselves with what Fears they please; and very often the more imaginary these Fears are, the more sure of spreading: But one Thing is certain, That the greatest Danger is generally the least attended to; I mean that of abusing the great Blessings we enjoy, the Danger of neglecting our own Salvation, and not improving by those Means which are put in our Power; the Danger of cavilling at, and by that Means sapping the Fundamentals of a Government, which we ought to value, and the Danger of injuring that Commerce by our *Extravagance* and bad Conduct, of which none else can deprive us.

3dly. Hence also we may see the Reasons in a very striking Light, why the Scriptures are so full and peremptory in laying down Rules of Government, and Maxims of Commerce. For if these two are only Branches of the general Plan of Providence, then it follows, that the System of Religion itself would not have been complete, were they left out. In short, Government and Commerce are no other than the Underparts and Supporters of true Religion. Thus therefore the Rules of Government are inculcated under the strongest Enforcements, both on the Parts of the Governors, and the Governed:

U

The

---The Governors are required to be Men who fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness, judging righteously between every Man and his Brother, and the Stranger that is with him, not wresting Judgment, or respecting Persons, but hearing the Small as well as the Great:---The Governed are commanded to be subject to the higher Powers, and that, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience Sake; and though they are free, they are not to use their Liberty as a Cloke of Maliciousness, but behave as the Servants of God. They are not to speak Evil of the Ruler of the People, but to consider him as a Terror to Evil-Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well.

AND as to Maxims of Commerce, not only the general Duties of Justice and Honesty, Punctuality and Fair-dealing, Temperance and Sobriety, but also the more particular Precepts of Industry and Diligence are frequently and solemnly inculcated. For Example, let every Man labour, working with his own Hands the Thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Be not slothful in Business. In the Morning sow thy Seed, and in the Evening withhold not thine Hand. There are some which walk disorderly, working not at all, but are Busy-bodies:---Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus, that
with

with Quietness they work and eat their own Bread: For if any Man will not work, neither should he eat.

THUS you see, from the whole Tenor of Scripture, that Government and Commerce, though too frequently considered as distinct from Religion, nay indeed as having nothing to do with it, are necessarily connected with it. They are Parts, necessary and essential Parts of the great universal Plan. And nothing can be more injurious to the Interests of true Religion, than to suppose, that those Systems of Providence, which relate to the good Government of Men's outward Actions, and the right Employment of their Time; should either clash with, or be independent of, the general System of the Gospel. In short, if you suppose this, the Words of my Text must be false; but if you will allow, that all three agree together, and center in one Point, then it is plain by Fact and Experience, as well as by Divine Authority, That Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having the Promise of the Life that now is, as well as that which is to come.

BUT lastly, though Religion is a Rule of Life, though Government is a Rule for outward Behaviour, and Commerce a System for the right and useful Employment of our Time,---yet this

is not the whole of your Duty and Obligation; and all these Things ought to be considered only as preparatory to a future State. For the Time is hastening, when we are to give an Account of every Transaction religious, civil, or commercial; and then, when we shall appear in the Presence of that Judge, who placed us here in a probationary State, and who is to punish or reward us eternally, we shall still find, that our Obedience to the Christian Rule, tho' a necessary Qualification, is not the meritorious Cause of our Pardon and Acceptance. Indeed Religion, as a *Rule of Life*, serves extremely well for the Purposes of this World; but Religion, as a System of Belief in the Blood of a Redeemer, is the grand Instrument to open our Prospects of Joy and Immortality into a future State. Therefore the Scheme of Reconciliation is by no Means to be dropt, when we consider the Extent of our Duty and Obligation: Nay, it is the Master-Spring of all; it is a necessary, it is a leading Part in the Religion of a Christian; it animates our present Hopes, it subdues our Fears, it strengthens our Resolutions even in Regard to the present Life; so that, in short, every good and useful Plan is bettered by it; and by that Means it shews plainly, how the Godliness relating to this Life, and that which is to come, center in one. They are both profitable,

fitable, they both concur to assure us, that the Happiness of this Life, and the Prospects of another, are *promised*, are *engaged* to be *ours*, provided we give a suitable Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure.

SERMON

[141]

the first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the

1000



S E R M O N VIII.

I COR. vii—31.

—They that use the World, as not abusing it.

THE Context in this Place is rather perplexed, which is owing perhaps to our Ignorance of those Customs or Practices to which the Apostle alludes, and which most undoubtedly he had in View, when he wrote. But whatever Obscurity there may be in the Context, there is none in the Text: For the Words themselves, independently considered, are plain and perspicuous; and they contain a Doctrine not only deducible from other Parts of Scripture, but also essentially connected with the Interest and Happiness of Mankind both here and hereafter. And yet so it hath happened, that this very Doctrine is rarely stated with that Clearness and Precision, or defended with that Strength and Fulness of Evidence, which the Importance of such a Subject

ject should require. Now the Doctrine itself is no other than this,—That we are permitted, nay, that we are commanded as a Matter of Duty, to *use* this World, but not to *abuse* it. Well then, in what doth the right Use of this World consist? And on the other Hand, when may it be said, that Men make a wrong and an improper Use of it? Surely these are very plain Questions; and yet, plain as they are, had they received those clear and satisfactory Answers, which might have been given,---what a Deal of useless Altercation about the Nature and the good, or bad Tendency of Luxury would have been spared! What mortifying Concessions on the one Hand, and what ill-grounded Triumphs on the other, would have been totally superseded by only defining the single previous Point: What is Luxury?

Now this is what I shall attempt to do in the following Discourse: And that I may the better attend to the more difficult Part of the Argument, I will consider the Subject before us of using the World, or of abusing it, only so far as it regards the more costly Ornaments of Life, and those Embellishments which belong to the higher Ranks in Society. For if it can be proved, that Luxury retards the Progress even of Grandeur and Magnificence, then surely it will be quite superfluous to descend to the Consideration

sideration of inferior Matters. Nay, the most zealous Advocates for Extravagance and Prodigality are not arrived to the Height of Absurdity, as to maintain, that the middling and the lower Classes, the Mechanic, the Labourer, and the Cottager, are doing Service to their Country by spending more than they can afford, and ruining themselves and Families. These therefore they willingly allow, ought to keep within the Bounds of Moderation ; because these ought to practice the Virtues of Industry and Frugality for the Sake of others, as well as of themselves.

To begin therefore with the Subject, and to confine ourselves within the Limits prescribed : The first Characteristic of Luxury is, when the Expence exceeds the Ability ; that is, when Men figure away in the great World for a Time, and then either sink into Poverty and Obscurity, or else must take bad Courses to support their Extravagance.

THE second is, when Persons live after such a Manner as, tho' it may last for their own Time, will nevertheless prevent them from making a Provision, or at least an adequate Provision for the succeeding Generation. This indeed is little more than the Removal of the former Evil to a more distant Period ; and the same Consequences must follow at last in the one Case, as in the other.

X

Now

Now, were we to have taken into Consideration the Effects which result from the Gratification of *sensual* Desires, and the Indulgence of *carnal* Appetites, other Characteristics, and other Criteria of Luxury, ought still to have been added to those two above mentioned. But these alone may suffice to prove, as far as the Point before us is concerned, that Luxury, even in high Life, and even in the most favourable View of it, is not that useful Thing to Society, which Moralists themselves have sometimes incautiously granted, and which the Advocates for Vice have pretended to demonstrate.

FOR let us now suppose the Capital of any great Kingdom to act after such a thoughtless and improvident Manner, as here described, only for a single Century: What Consequences would then follow? And what Progress would be made in the more elegant and refined Arts, from first to last, during that Period?---Perhaps indeed at first, a greater Degree of Skill and Ingenuity might be excited by the excessive Sums squandered away for erecting noble Structures, and for adorning them with the most curious Productions of Art and Genius. But how long could such an Extravagance be supported? And when Want and Penury ensued, what Encouragement would then be given to the Man of Genius, or the Man of Industry, to proceed,

or

or to improve upon the former Models? Granting therefore, that the first Generation in such a Metropolis might shine forth with a Blaze so dazzling, as to attract the Envy of unthinking Beholders; yet, alas! what would become of the second? for the Lustre of that must necessarily diminish. And then, as to the third Generation, the Oil of their dim Lamp would be totally spent; and if we were still to go on by extending our Reasonings to the Contemplation of the State of the fourth, the fifth, and sixth Generation, the Prospect would grow worse and worse; and by a natural Transition from Waste to Poverty, the few wretched Descendents of the first Prodigals would be glad to inhabit some Corner of the mouldering Palaces of their Ancestors, fitted up as Huts or Hovels for their Reception.

Now these Consequences are obvious; indeed they are inevitable: What Remedy therefore can be applied for the Cure of such a consuming Disease, which, like a Canker, eats away the Substance, 'till the whole Constitution is destroyed? None:---But such an one, which by curing, or rather palliating the Evil, evidently shews, that the Cause of it was *Luxury*, the very Cause here assigned. The Remedy therefore is this: To substitute a more virtuous, frugal, and industrious Set of Men in the Room of the

former; who, by purchasing the Mansions of the Profuse and Prodigal, and by living in them, might support the Eclat of this once celebrated Metropolis, which otherwise must have been a Desert.

AGREED :---But is not this the very Principle which we maintain, viz. That Luxury, as far as it is suffered to operate, brings on inevitable Ruin? And that the Prevention of such Ruin is owing to a Cause the very reverse? In short, if the Evils resulting from the Abuse of the good Things of the World become less fatal than they otherwise would have been, or are in some Degree corrected,---to what is that owing, but to the right Use and proper Application of such Things.

HOWEVER, to make this Matter still the clearer, let us change our Situation, and observe the Prospect from an opposite Point of View; that is, let us suppose the Inhabitants of this Capital to have set out aright from the Beginning, and to have invariably pursued the same Course for ever after. What Consequences would have ensued? And in what Manner would the Cultivation of the fine Arts be retarded or promoted by this Alteration of the Case? Now if we are to imagine that the Inhabitants of this Metropolis did begin from the lowest Stages, then we must allow that the *Necessaries* of Life
must

must have been the first Objects of their Care and Attention. But after these had been sufficiently provided for, and a growing Fund of Wealth established, Mankind would naturally expand their Desires and extend their Thoughts to the Comforts and Conveniences of their *respective* Conditions;—I say their respective Conditions, because different Ranks and Conditions would immediately arise, even tho' all the Inhabitants were equal in Virtue:---They would arise from the Inequality of Talents, of Skill, and Application, and of good or ill Fortune attending their Affairs. Wherefore, I say, the *Comforts and Conveniences* of their *respective* Conditions would be their next Concern; and very probably the first Generation would here terminate their Views, and look no farther. But the second Generation, by still persevering in the same Plan of good Œconomy, would be enabled, without Detriment to their Circumstances, to advance many Degrees higher; so that the Works of Genius would then begin to appear, a Taste for the polite Arts would arise, various Talents would be excited, and an Emulation be kindled both among the Artists themselves, and their several Encouragers. Now from such *Elegancies and Refinements* in Society, the Gradation is easy and natural to that which is *grand and magnificent*; and thus the Affair might

might be carried on from Generation to Generation throughout an almost endless Progression and Variety. Nay, there is no saying where it must stop, or what Boundaries or Limits would necessarily prevent its proceeding farther. For it is not true, tho' commonly received as a Truth, that great Cities and great Empires *must* have their Periods, as well as private Men. Indeed they *may*, but no Reason can be given why they *must*: For the natural Man must die, let him take what Care he will; because no Regimen whatever can ward off the Approaches of old Age. But if the public Body, or political Man, should always observe a due Regimen; if he should never deviate from the Paths of Virtue, never impoverish himself by Luxury, nor impair his Faculties by Debauchery; nay, what is still more, if, after having injured himself greatly in these Respects, he would rightly apply the proper Medicines (that is, frame good Laws, and see them duly and wisely executed) he would recover from this dangerous Disease; and then the longer he lived, the more Health and Vigour he would acquire: For Length of Days strengthens the Constitution of such a Being, instead of impairing it.

HOWEVER, without labouring to carry the Point thus far, let us now rest the Merits of the Cause on the general Question, viz. Whether

ther the Persons who use this World, or those who abuse it, are, on the whole, to be considered as the real Patrons and Promoters of the Arts and Sciences? And which of the two, Luxury or Virtue, deserves to be adopted by every wise State, in order to find Employment for the greatest Numbers of ingenious Men in their several Departments?---Surely if a Register were kept of the Numbers respectively employed in both the capital Cities here supposed, for a Succession of Generations, this could never be made a Question. For most undoubtedly, if any Thing in the moral and political World can amount to a Demonstration, it is this,—That an annual Increase of Riches, of Population, and of stately Buildings, both public and private, must prove more beneficial to the Professors of the polite Arts than an annual Decrease, a Depopulation, a Desertion, and a Decay.

FROM hence therefore several Inferences of Importance may be drawn; with the principal of which I will now beg Leave to close my present Discourse.

As first,---It clearly appears, from what has been said, that there can be no real and lasting Opposition between the Laws of sound Morality, and those of sound Policy; whatever crude Opinions may be entertained to the contrary. For even in these Cases, where it was heretofore usually imagined that strict Morality had the Disadvantage,

Disadvantage, it is now evident that the Fact itself is far otherwise; and all the Claims which Luxury, in the most favourable View of it, can possibly make, amount to no more than this,-- That for a short Time it doth promote a greater Demand for the ornamental Parts of Furniture, Dress, and Equipage, than in Prudence there ought to have been. A mighty Advantage truly! Much to be boasted of! and much to be desired! For this brisk temporary Circulation of Industry in the Body politic is just the same as a feverish Circulation of the Blood in the natural Body; a Circulation, which may give a transient Flow of Spirits, and may raise a false Fire for a little while, but is sure of bringing on afterwards a general Weakness and Debility, and must prove fatal, if not corrected in Time. Indeed there is something extravagant, if not impious in the Supposition, that Morality and Policy, when rightly defined, and properly understood, should be at Variance with each other. For what an Idea must this give us of the Divine Being? What a strange Constitution of the World would that have been, had it been necessary that our Duty and our Interest should always clash? Nay, in order to do the most Good to Mankind, by feeding and supporting the greatest Numbers of God's rational Creatures, we must be disobedient to the Laws of the Creator?---No: Our gracious Creator and

wise moral Governor hath not so ordered the Course of Things; nor was He that short-sighted, or improvident, or malicious Being, as to make that to be our Duty, which is not upon the whole, even as to the Affairs of this World, our Interest likewise.

BUT 2dly, From what has been said, we may gather this useful Conclusion, viz. That the Terms *using* the World, or *abusing* it, or, in other Words, *Temperance* and *Excess* are relative Expressions, whose Signification must be ascertained by the Circumstances of the Case. For what may be the strictest Temperance in one Man, may nevertheless become a great Excess in another; and both the using this World, and the abusing it, must refer to the respective Constitution, Circumstance, Age, or Condition, of this or that particular Individual.

THUS, for Example, he who uses this World properly, and as a wise and good Man ought to do, is he who adjusts his Enjoyments by the following Standard, viz. 1st, When his Expences are brought within his Income:--2dly, When he makes a decent and adequate Provision for his Family and Dependents:--3dly, When he lays by for Contingencies:--4thly, When he obliges himself to be a good Oeconomist, in order to be the better able to provide for the Necessities of the Poor:--5thly, When he indulges himself in no Gratifications, which may

Y

injure

injure either the Health of his Body, or the Faculties of his Mind :---And lastly, When in all his Enjoyments, he has a Regard to the Influence he may have over others, so as to set them no bad or dangerous Example.

Now whosoever will limit his Pleasures, Diversions, or Expences, by these Regulations, he is not a luxurious but a temperate Man: He doth not abuse the good Things of Providence, but rightly uses them, according to the gracious Design of the Donor. Nay, were he to do less, were he to deny himself such Gratifications as can be enjoyed compatibly with these Rules, he would not fill the Station, nor live up to the Rank and Character allotted for him. In short, he would be the *covetous Man*, whom God abhorreth; a Man, who, by not using the World enough, does not promote that Circulation of Labour and Industry in it which he ought to do. He is therefore injurious to Society by a *Defect*, as the other was proved to be by an *Excess*.

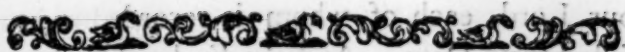
WHEREFORE 3dly, and to conclude,---If both these Extremes are detrimental to the public Welfare, as well as offensive to Almighty God, we see by this Instance, as by every other, that Virtue and good Morals have the Promise of this Life, as well as of that which is to come. Surely then the Terms and Conditions required of us in order to be happy hereafter,
are

are not so hard and severe, as both the indiscreet Friends and determined Foes of Religion would make us believe. For what are these harsh Conditions? They are, as far as the present Subject is concerned, no more than this,—That we ought to use the World, but not abuse it:—They are what a prudent Man would do for his own Sake, were there no Hereafter:---They are what a benevolent Man would do for the Sake of the Public:---And what a Christian would do in Obedience to the Commands of God, and for the Sake of his own immortal Soul.

SERMON

we not to hard on a word, as both the individual
 friends and detractors of the cause of Religion would
 make us believe. For what are these hands
 Conditions? They are, as the old proverb
 says, "It is concerned no more than that" — that
 we ought to do the World, and not the World
 They are what a prudent man would do for his
 own sake, were there no other reason. They are
 what a benevolent man would do for the sake
 of the Public: — And what a Christian would do
 in Obedience to the Commandment, "Love thy
 neighbour as thyself."

to
 P
 In
 g
 b
 o
 ri
 ea
 an
 m
 th
 va
 W
 pr
 CI



S E R M O N IX.

2 CORINTH. ii. 27.—*In Fastings often.*

IN the early Ages of the Church there were no regular or stated Fasts appointed by Authority; but each Person fasted occasionally in Proportion to the Fervour of his Zeal, or according to the peculiar Circumstances of his spiritual Condition. In after Times, when Modes of Discipline began to be established, and ecclesiastical Politics became necessary for containing the Multitude of Believers within due Order, then certain periodical Times of Fasting were fixed upon; and each of these were different, both as to Strictness and Duration, according to the Severity or Remissness of particular Churches. At last all these Variations seemed to settle in the Observation of the forty Days of *Lent*, and the four Weeks of *Ember*, which were regarded as the principal, tho' not the only, stated Fasts in the Christian Church. As to the Institution of
Lent,

Lent, its peculiar Length seems to have been derived from the Examples both of *Moses* and our Lord, each of whom is recorded to have fasted forty Days. And the End and Design of this *Lent* Fast was apparently the following,—To prepare the Heathen Converts, after a most solemn Course of Instruction, for Baptism at *Easter*; to oblige all Apostates to Idolatry, and such as had been convicted of notorious Sins, to go through a regular and open Course of Penance, before they could be admitted into Communion with the Faithful; and lastly to afford to each Individual a proper Opportunity of inspecting into the State of his Soul, of humbling himself before the Throne of Mercy for his past Transgressions, of imploring Pardon and Peace, and entreating the Succours of Divine Grace to live a better Life for the future.

THE first of these Ends is happily superseded by the total Conversion of the Heathen in these Countries; the second is superseded in Part, seeing that the Apostacies from the Faith are now no Apostacies to Idolatry: But as our Church laments the Want of Discipline in respect to the Penance formerly enjoined on such notorious Offenders as were a Scandal to Christianity; and as the present Age doth not appear to be at all disposed for the Revival of such a Discipline, I shall, on these Accounts, be silent on this Head. The third End of the Institution,

as it still subsists, and ever will, while Men have Offences to be forgiven, and Improvements to make, is therefore a proper Subject for our present Meditation.

“ THE Design, you see, is to inspect into the State of our Souls,---to humble ourselves before the Throne of Mercy for past Offences,---to implore Pardon and Peace,---and to entreat the Succours of Divine Grace, that we may live better Lives for the future.” And surely such a Design is good. Indeed it is so good, that perhaps to some it may seem difficult to give a Reason for allotting any one particular Season for doing that which is proper to be done at all Seasons.

BUT this Difficulty will vanish, if we consider that human Nature requires much the same Sort of Application and Intermision in adjusting Accounts relating to spiritual Things, as are necessary in regard to worldly Concerns; and that our Christian State of Probation is similar to that of an earthly Stewardship in most of those Points in which a Comparison can be made.

Now you know, that in worldly Matters the allotting of some particular Time for the adjusting of your Accounts certainly doth not, or at least ought not, to imply that you lived without Rule before; or that you intended to break loose, and throw off all Oeconomy for the future;---’till the periodical Time of reckoning should

should return. But the true Meaning and real Use of such particular Seasons are, that you may methodize your Books, and bring your more extended Dealings into so convenient a Compass, as to be able to take in the whole at one View, and thereby form a true Judgment on your Circumstances and State of Affairs.

TAKE therefore this Idea with you, (for while we are in the Body, we are obliged to make use of sensible Images, in order to comprehend spiritual Things) and then see what rational Use and just Application may be made of the Time of *Lent*. The Business and Duty of Man is to live godlily, righteously, and soberly in this present World. This he ought to do at all Times; and there cannot be mentioned a Moment in his Life, in which he is allowed to do otherwise. But nevertheless it is very possible, that the best of Men may not have paid an equal Attention to every Part of their Duty; some Things may begin to run behind-hand; and these, if not taken in Time, would certainly grow worse: Not to mention, that a general Survey and a particular Scrutiny may detect those Oversights which escape Notice in daily Practice. But if the best ought to allot themselves some particular Seasons for Inspection and Recollection, what do you think ought others to do, whose Incumbrances and Arrears are become immoderately great, and are still growing

growing greater?---For these Reasons there is certainly no Impropriety in the Institution of *Lent*; nay by these Reasons it plainly appears, that excellent Advantages may be derived from it, provided that a proper Use is made of the Appointment, and that we expect no more than sober Sense, or Christian Prudence can justly warrant.

Now as the Institution, in this View of it, may be considered as a solemn annual Call to every Man to examine the State of his Soul, in order to give an Account of his Stewardship to his Conscience, and his God;---the great Question is, How is this important Work to be begun? It certainly ought not to be begun in the Midst of Rioting and Drunkenness, Chambering and Wantonness; nor yet would it be right on such an Occasion to indulge one's self in the common Amusements and innocent Enjoyments of Life, because these are Impediments to the Affair we are going about. A Man, who is to settle and adjust some important Concern, and to put it upon a new and better Footing, chuses to be cool, retired, and collected; and much more would he chuse it, were the Affair itself of such a Nature, as to be particularly affected by the Temper and Disposition he was in, when he set about it. Now the Point to be settled, in this Case, is simply this: Do you command your Appetites and Passions?

Z

Or

Or do they command you?---And the very Stating of the Question evidently supposes the Necessity of denying the Appetites and Passions something of their usual Gratifications during the Progress of this Inquiry. Hath therefore your Love, or your Aversion, your Joy, or your Sorrow been directed to their respective proper Objects? To what Degree were they raised and excited? And upon what Motives or Principles did you act? Have the Appetites been gratified no farther than pure uncorrupted Nature designed they should? And of what good or bad Tendency may your Example have been to others?—These are Inquiries which must be made, if made to any Purpose, while the Mind is cool, and the Body temperate. And therefore the Institution of Fasting, as far as Fasting contributes to this End, is no other than the Doing of a good Thing in the *best* Manner.

As to the Degree, or Intensity of the Fast, Christian Prudence must determine this: And no Rules whatever ought to subvert or entrench upon the grand Rule of all, which is, that our Passions should be so lowered and weakened by the Fast as would best enable us to take a Survey of them, and to correct what is amiss; I say, they should be lowered and weakened to this Degree, but no farther. Indeed to proceed farther would be Superstition, and not Religion. And perhaps too the Attempt itself would render

der some of these Affections more keen, violent, and ungovernable, than otherwise they would have been.

THE Business of this particular Season being thus shewn to be the Examining into the State of our Souls, and Auditing of our spiritual Accounts, let us proceed on to observe, that in this Christian Stewardship there are two capital Points in which it generally differs from those of an earthly Steward. The one is, that our Accounts are worse kept; and the other, that we may for the future keep them better. And both these prove in another View the Reasonableness and Expedience of the present Institution. As to the Circumstance, that our Accounts are generally worse kept than those of an earthly Steward;---this is only saying in other Words, that all Mankind, even the very best of us, are guilty before God: Whereas a good earthly Steward may not only be clear of the Charge of Guilt, but also may justly insist upon personal Merit in his Master's Service; and his Accounts may have been so fairly, and so regularly, and punctually kept, that they could not have been kept better. Now, who will pretend to say, that this is *his Case* in respect to God? Who will dare to enter into Judgment with his Maker upon the same Terms that an honest and careful Servant may challenge the Inspection and Scrutiny of his Principal here below? And if

he cannot do this, the Inference is plain. He has Arrears to account for, and Debts to discharge;—(in what Manner soever this is to be done, or how our Pardon is to be obtained, in Case they are not discharged, is a separate Consideration, and refers to other Parts of the Christian System, not now before us.)---But if the Accounts of the best of us are but badly kept, we are to observe in the next Place, that as we might formerly, so we may still, for the future, keep them better. To say otherwise is to charge the Sin upon God, and not upon ourselves. For after all the Allowances that can possibly be made for human Infirmities, we know, that God expects no more from us, than what he hath enabled, or is ready to enable us to perform: And we know also, that none of us have made so good an Use either of our own, Abilities, or of the Grace of God as we might have done;---and consequently as we may do hereafter, unless it be our own Fault.

THIS being the Case, let us now consider the present Season as a Time more peculiarly proper for making some Experiment or other of this Kind. What is past we cannot recall; but we ought to be heartily sorry for it, and to avoid the like for the future. Here then is the Point to which the Experiment should tend; and whatever the Sin was, which heretofore did easily beset us, we are now to make a Trial, whether

whether we cannot remove ourselves from it, or it from us;---and in short, whether we cannot either weaken the Force of the Temptation, or strengthen ourselves by pious Resolutions and the Grace of God; so as to be able to resist in the evil Day, and having done all, *to stand*.

Now, in regard to this Matter, the same Apostle, who tells his *Corinthians* in the Text, that he was in *Fastings often*, had, in a former Letter to them, recommended the Use of Fasting, as the properest Means for making the Experiment or Trial here proposed. “ Know
 “ ye not, says he, that they who run in a Race,
 “ run all; but one receiveth the Prize? So run,
 “ that ye may obtain. And every Man that
 “ striveth for the Mastery, is temperate in all
 “ Things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible. I
 “ therefore so run, not as uncertainly : So fight
 “ I, not as one that beateth the Air: But I
 “ keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection; lest that by any Means when I have
 “ preached to others, I myself should be a Cast-away.”

You see here the Aim and Intention of this great Apostle: He did not use Abstinence himself, or recommend it to others, as an *End*, but as a *Means*: That is, he did not prescribe it for its own Sake, but for the Sake of something else,

he cannot do this, the Inference is plain. He has Arrears to account for, and Debts to discharge;—(in what Manner soever this is to be done, or how our Pardon is to be obtained, in Case they are not discharged, is a separate Consideration, and refers to other Parts of the Christian System, not now before us.)---But if the Accounts of the best of us are but badly kept, we are to observe in the next Place, that as we might formerly, so we may still, for the future, keep them better. To say otherwise is to charge the Sin upon God, and not upon ourselves. For after all the Allowances that can possibly be made for human Infirmities, we know, that God expects no more from us, than what he hath enabled, or is ready to enable us to perform: And we know also, that none of us have made so good an Use either of our own, Abilities, or of the Grace of God as we might have done;---and consequently as we may do hereafter, unless it be our own Fault.

THIS being the Case, let us now consider the present Season as a Time more peculiarly proper for making some Experiment or other of this Kind. What is past we cannot recall; but we ought to be heartily sorry for it, and to avoid the like for the future. Here then is the Point to which the Experiment should tend; and whatever the Sin was, which heretofore did easily beset us, we are now to make a Trial, whether

whether we cannot remove ourselves from it, or it from us ;---and in short, whether we cannot either weaken the Force of the Temptation, or strengthen ourselves by pious Resolutions and the Grace of God ; so as to be able to resist in the evil Day, and having done all, *to stand*.

Now, in regard to this Matter, the same Apostle, who tells his *Corinthians* in the Text, that he was in *Fastings often*, had, in a former Letter to them, recommended the Use of Fasting, as the properest Means for making the Experiment or Trial here proposed. “ Know
 “ ye not, says he, that they who run in a Race,
 “ run all; but one receiveth the Prize? So run,
 “ that ye may obtain. And every Man that
 “ striveth for the Mastery, is temperate in all
 “ Things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible. I
 “ therefore so run, not as uncertainly : So fight
 “ I, not as one that beateth the Air: But I
 “ keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection ; lest that by any Means when I have
 “ preached to others, I myself should be a Cast-away.”

You see here the Aim and Intention of this great Apostle : He did not use Abstinence himself, or recommend it to others, as an *End*, but as a *Means* : That is, he did not prescribe it for its own Sake, but for the Sake of something else,

else, to be obtained by it. And what was that? It was in order to be the better able, so to run as to receive the Christian Prize. It was so to strive as to obtain the incorruptible Crown; And to sum up all, it was so to subdue his own Appetites and Passions, that he might not lose those Glories himself, which he had so earnestly recommended to others to aspire after.

SEEING therefore that we have the same Tempers to subdue, the same Race to run, and the same Crown of immortal Glory to obtain, what can be clearer than that which he thus did and recommended, is likewise incumbent on us to do, and to recommend in the like Circumstances? Nay farther, seeing that the Ideas he made use of serve so well to prove and illustrate the Subject, may they not likewise serve to guard against any Abuse or Misapplication of the Doctrine? Surely they may, if we consider their proper Scope and Tendency.

THUS for Example, Do you expect that mere Fasting will atone for Guilt? Do you hope, that by barely inflicting some voluntary Punishment on yourself, you can thereby prevent or supersede the Punishment of God? Alas! The Apostle's Argument favours no such Conclusion; and all Expectations of this Sort are groundless and vain. For his Argument plainly proves, that his Temperance or Abstinence was only
valuable

valuable because it was useful: And useful for what?---For keeping his Body in Subjection, for enabling him to run the Race, and to win the Crown. Therefore if you can suppose, that when he had fasted ever so long, or ever so strictly, or inflicted ever so great Severities upon his Body, he would have considered these Things as an Attonement for sinful Appetites and Passions, and would have attempted no Amendment;---what do you think would have been the Consequence?---What but this, that he himself, with all his Austerities and regular Penances, would have been a Cast-away.

AGAIN:---Do you expect, that a Change of Meats is equivalent to a new Heart, and a Change of Affections? If you do, you must draw your Inference from some other Topic than that of either the Apostle's Precept, or Example. For both of them tend to shew, that the great End to be aimed at was a Change of Affections;---and that Abstinence, or the being temperate in all Things, (whether this regarded the Quantity, or Quality of Meats or Drinks, or of any other Enjoyment) was only the Instrument of Virtue, but not Virtue itself.

MOREOVER, do you expect that a temporary refraining from any Sin will give you a Licence for returning to it again, when this Season of
 Restraint

Restraint is over?---Surely the Apostle had no such Notion, when he told his *Corinthians*, that whether they eat or drank, or *whatever they did*, they should do *all* to the Glory of God. And when they were required by him to be steadfast, unmoveable, and *always abounding* in the Work of the Lord, surely he did not mean to say, that provided they refrained from sinning to Day, he would give them Licence to sin To-morrow.

THE Conclusion of the whole is this, The Institution of *Lent*, and the Appointment of a particular Season for a more solemn Self-Examination, are excellent Things, when under the Direction of Christian Prudence: For then they become really profitable for Doctrine, for Re-proof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: And then no rational Objection can be brought against them. But if you use these Means of Religion with a View to destroy Religion itself, who can vindicate such a Conduct? Or how can you expect to receive either from God, or Man the Salutation of *Well done*, thou good and faithful Servant?

IN one Word, a good Instrument, such as this before us, will prove of great Use in the Hands of a good Man towards working out his Salvation, and making his Calling and Election sure:---The Profane and Irreligious will neglect

and despise it, and make no Use of it at all:---
 The Superstitious will indeed use it; but then
 it is to such Purposes, as are quite opposite to
 what it was intended:---Whereas the rational
 and pious Christian, by hoping and praying for
 the Divine Blessing on the just Use of proper
 Means, keeps clear of both Extremes; and
 performs a reasonable Service, holy in the
 Means, holy in the End, and acceptable unto
 God through Jesus Christ.

To whom, &c.

A a

SERMON

and desire it, and every one of us shall
be successful in it, if we only
do so with a pure heart, as our
Father is in heaven. — *When we are*
and those who are, by doing and
the Divine Blessing on the path of
them, keep that of their hearts, and
receive a reasonable service, and
show, holy in the land, and according to
the through Jesus Christ.

— *When we are*



S E R M O N X.

LUKE ix—28.

*If I have taken any Thing from any Man
by false Accusation, I restore Fourfold.*



MY Intention in the following Discourse is to recommend to you the great and indispensable Duty of Restitution: A Duty, seldom professedly treated on from the Pulpit, though certainly as necessary as any; and without which there can be no such Thing as sincere and true Repentance. Perhaps the Nature of the Subject may be supposed to be too satirical, and too pointing for a private Congregation. Perhaps the Explanation of Circumstances, the stating of Facts, and the Enumeration of Cases, might seem rather designed as a personal Invective, than a general Reproof,---for each Person to make the Application to his own Breast.

NOTHING of this Nature can happen on the present Occasion: For this is a mixt Audience, made up out of many Congregations. And a mixt Audience is certainly the fittest for such a Subject. [Probably for these, and such like Reasons the judicious and pious Mr. COLSTON appointed the Subject of Restitution to be among the Number of his public Lectures.] Not to mention, that this Season of *Lent* is particularly set apart for scrutinizing more thoroughly into all the Doublings and evasive Dealings of our deceitful Hearts; and is intended to be such a Kind of annual Memento to the Healthy, as the Bed of Sickness is, or ought to be, to others.

Now, were that excellent Rule but duly observed, of doing to others as we would be done by, there could be no such Thing as Restitution: For where there is no Injury, there can be no Reparation. But when this good Rule is violated, and an Injury committed, then Restitution becomes necessary, as the only Method remaining in our Power of doing Justice. And therefore there are as many Branches of it, as there are Ways of doing wrong, or Injustice to our Neighbour; --which indeed are almost infinite: But which may nevertheless be ranged or summed up under three general Heads, viz.

- Injuries to the Fortune;
- Injuries to the Character; and
- Injuries to the Person of our Neighbour.

OUR

OUR Neighbour may be injured in his Fortune two Ways, 1st, openly, 2dly, disguisedly.

AN OPEN Injury is committed when no Arts are used, and no Pains taken to conceal the Wrong; and when the injured Person himself knows both the Injustice which is done him, and the Author of it;---but cannot redress himself. This comes principally to pass, when daring Robberies are committed, or when Violence is used in acquiring, or retaining the Goods of our Neighbour;---also in refusing to pay our just Debts, and the like. For the Hand of Oppression thus becomes visible; and the Weak and the Defenceless have nothing but Cries and Tears to oppose to Force and Power. The like doth likewise happen, when Advantage is taken of the Wants and Distresses of our poor Brother in the Way of Traffic; when his Necessities, instead of moving Compassion, become so many Objects to be preyed upon; and when we compell him either to take less, or give more, in the Way of buying and selling, than he could afford to do, or would have done, had he been in better Circumstances. All these are Instances of open Wrongs, and notorious Violations of Justice.

FRAUDULENT Injuries are those, where the injured Person is ignorant, at the Time, of the Injustice done him, and perhaps suspects no Harm. The chief Instance in this Respect is
that

that of Theft: But in every other Circumstance, where Art is used with an Intent to deceive and to impose, the Fact is a Species of the same Crime, tho' called by other Names. Consequently false Weights, or false Measures, bad Money, bad Bills, bad Titles of Estates or Mortgages, fallacious Samples of Goods, the putting off one Sort of Goods for another, and in short every Kind of Trick or Artifice of the Seller upon the Buyer, or the Buyer upon the Seller, come within this Denomination. But above all a Breach of Trust is the highest Aggravation of Guilt; because a Servant, a Steward, a Clerk, or a Friend, an Executor, a Guardian, or the like, in whom peculiar Confidence was placed, who ought therefore to have been a Guard and a Protection against the Impositions of others,---if such an one should become false to his Trust, an Imposer and a Deceiver himself, he is indeed worse than a Thief. Nay, in Matters of Traffic, we ought not to take Advantage even of the Ignorance of others, but should deal with them as fairly and uprightly, as if they understood the Nature and Value of the Goods as perfectly as we ourselves. Thus much as to the Nature of those Crimes which are committed by one private Person against the Property of another.

BUT suppose they are committed against a Collection of Men, called a Body Corporate;

or

or against the great Community, called the State or Kingdom, and consequently against the King, as the Representative and Head of all:---Do they thereby change their Nature? Or do those Actions, which were criminal before, now become innocent? Surely no: It is impossible they should change their Nature, by a Circumstance which must increase their Malignity. For Crimes against the Public are attended with such Consequences, as spread the Contagion of Vice much wider, and are more detrimental to Virtue and to good Morals, than the like Crimes, the like Violences, or Frauds committed against private Persons.

AND yet how different do most People think of these Matters! How light do they make of any Injury that is done to the Public! A contraband Trade is nothing; nay, it is well, if it is not esteemed meritorious, and more than half a Virtue. And as to Custom-House Oaths, Dealings with the Government, or with public Bodies, and all the other Methods whereby Society is injured and defrauded, who is there that scruples the Repetition of these over and over? Nay, who is there that doth not glory in the Art and Address, the refined Policy, and good Management that are practised on these Occasions?

BUT to expatiate no longer on such Facts, as are too notorious to be denied, and too bad to be palliated, let us proceed now to the Injuries

juries which may be committed against the *Character* of our Neighbour. For this may be injured by various Means, and in different Manners.

A false Accusation in a Court of Justice is the most flagrant Instance of doing an Injury to the Character of our Neighbour; and is a direct Violation of the Ninth Commandment. Indeed this is so atrocious a Crime, that none are found hardy enough to appear openly in its Defence. And yet this very Crime, under another Form, gains Admittance almost every where; and is the Source or Fountain Head, from whence is derived a great Part of our modern Conversation. For what are *Calumny* and *Scandal*, but bearing false Witness? And where is the Difference, excepting the Formality of a Court of Justice, and perhaps the Sentence of a Judge and Jury, between the one and the other? The Injury may sometimes be as great in the one Case as in the other, and sometimes greater. But if the Event should happen to be otherwise, surely no Thanks are due to the Calumniator or Slanderer on that Account.---Nor will it much mend the Matter, tho' another should be the Inventor of the Lye or Scandal, and you only the Propagator of it. For if you know it to be a Lie, you are equally criminal: And if you do not know it to be true, why do you, how dare you, to propagate it all? Nay, granting that *it is true*, and that you *know* it to be so;---yet what is your Motive for spreading

ing abroad such an unwelcome Truth? Is it the Glory of God? Is it the Good of Mankind? Or is it the Reformation of the Offender?--- One or more of these Motives you certainly ought to have in View, in divulging even such Stories, which you know to be true; otherwise there can be no Defence, or Apology offered in Justification of your Proceedings. What then can be said for the far greater Part of those censuring and detracting Conversations, with which the World is generally amused, and which, though they should be true, have no other Object, than the gratifying a petulant Humour;---but which, if they should be false, as they generally are, may do one of the most irreparable Injuries, that Man can suffer in this Life?

AND here I cannot omit taking Notice of an Evil which is grown up to a most amazing Height in this Kingdom, and is truly become a national Vice; and that is, the Defamation of the Characters of Persons in high Stations. For in regard to this Matter, we now seem to proceed by a Rule, which is quite contrary to what the Laws both of God, and our Country, require of us. The express Law of God is, that we shall not speak Evil of Dignities, and of the Rulers of the People. But what is the Practice? Why truly, Dignities and Rulers are the Persons of all others, whom every Man

B b

thinks

thinks he has a *Right* to speak Evil of; and he glories in it, as the distinguishing Privilege of a free-born *Englishman*. Hence it is, that the greatest Pains are taken to represent every Thing, which our Superiors say or do, in the worst Light possible. And nothing is so incredible, or so absurd, but may be raised, propagated, and pretended to be believed on this Head:—Tho' at the same Time, the Persons who spread these Stories about, must know them to be false;—or at the most, *cannot know them to be true*. And yet there is no Man, who would like to be served so himself, were he in the same Situation. He knows, that this is not doing as he would be done by: He knows likewise, that many of the Things he condemns, might be taken in a better Light; and that it is his Duty to put the most charitable Interpretation upon them. Yet, for all that, he will put the worst; and load them with all the odious Constructions and black Insinuations he can devise. Now if this is Christianity, if these are the Fruits of the holy Spirit of God, it is hard to say, what are the Works of the Flesh, and the Suggestions of the Devil. Besides, if Calumny and Misrepresentations, if Lying and Slandering, if Railings and evil Surmisings are very bad, very anti-christian Practices, when vented against Persons in private Stations;—what must they be, when levelled at public Characters,

Characters, where every Instance of bearing false Witness is of worse Consequence, and doth greater Mischief?---Surely, surely, this Observation ought to have some Weight;---tho', I am afraid, it is found in fact to have none, or rather to give People a greater Propensity to do what is forbid, and to add an *higher Relish* to the Commission of the Crime. Thus far as to the Laws of God:---And in regard to the Laws of our Country, they have forbid the same Actions under the severest Penalties. But if the Laws of God are so little regarded, it is not to be expected that much Deference will be paid to the Laws of Man;---especially in a Case where their Force is so easily eluded, as it is with us at present.

THE last Instance of doing Injuries, is that which may be done to the *Person* of our Neighbour. And this is twofold; the first respecting his Body,---the other his Soul. Violences to the Body are so easily known, and so readily understood, that the bare mentioning of them is sufficient. And from the most cruel Murder to the slightest Maiming, or insulting Blow, every one judges of the Nature of the Crime, and the Proportion of the Punishment. But Injuries done to the Soul are not so easily estimated. And yet they are the worst, and most detrimental of all. The Person, who corrupts the Faith, or taints the Morals of another, may

commit such an Injury, as the whole World could not compensate: And if he drew his Brother into Sin, it is hardly to be conceived, much less to be expressed, how wide this Sin may extend, and what Numbers it may be the Cause of corrupting, and ruining hereafter. In this Light not only infidel Authors, or infidel Companions, may do great Mischief; but also all other Authors, and all other Companions, who entice and ensnare; and who insinuate the Poison of Vice by the Wit and Mirth, the Agreeableness and Pleasantry, with which they know how to disguise, and set it off.

AND thus, my Brethren, I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole Counsel of God, as far as I was able:---Not indeed with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but with Sincerity, and with Truth. And whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, these are Points that ought to be insisted on; these are Doctrines that must not be omitted. To do less would be to daub the Conscience with untempered Mortar, and to say to it, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace. And therefore I must further add, that as the several Kinds of Injuries have now been set forth, the Doctrine of Restitution is next to follow. And in regard to this, one Thing is clear and evident, viz. That wherever a Reparation can be made, it ought to be done; And no Pretence whatever can excuse in

fuch

such a Case. To say, it is more than you can spare, or it would hurt your Family, is saying nothing: For, if you detain what belongs to another, you detain what is not your own; and consequently can have no Right to it at all, how convenient soever it might be for you, or your Family to keep it. Nay, even giving some Part of it, or all of it, to the Poor, will not do in the present Case. For while there is another Owner, the Poor have no Right to it. And consequently you must not think of excusing your Guilt, by making them the innocent Accomplices and Receivers. All that can be allowed in such a Case is this, viz. That while you are making the *full* Restitution, you may conceal your Name and Person, if you think proper. But even this ought not to be done, if an innocent Person is suspected of your Crime, and cannot otherwise be cleared. For you must restore his Character by confessing your own Guilt, as well as by making Reparation for the original Injury.

In all other Cases, where Money cannot make a Reparation, you must endeavour to undo what has been done amiss, as much as possible: And a contrary Behaviour must indicate the Sense you have of your past Errors, and your hearty Desires to retrieve them. In some Cases this is all that *can* be done; and therefore is all that ought to be expected. But in others, where begging Pardon, and intreating Forgiveness are
also

commit such an Injury, as the whole World could not compensate: And if he drew his Brother into Sin, it is hardly to be conceived, much less to be expressed, how wide this Sin may extend, and what Numbers it may be the Cause of corrupting, and ruining hereafter. In this Light not only infidel Authors, or infidel Companions, may do great Mischief; but also all other Authors, and all other Companions, who entice and ensnare; and who insinuate the Poison of Vice by the Wit and Mirth, the Agreeableness and Pleasantry, with which they know how to disguise, and set it off.

AND thus, my Brethren, I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole Counsel of God, as far as I was able:---Not indeed with the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but with Sincerity, and with Truth. And whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, these are Points that ought to be insisted on; these are Doctrines that must not be omitted. To do less would be to daub the Conscience with untempered Mortar, and to say to it, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace. And therefore I must further add, that as the several Kinds of Injuries have now been set forth, the Doctrine of Restitution is next to follow. And in regard to this, one Thing is clear and evident, viz. That wherever a Reparation can be made, it ought to be done; And no Pretence whatever can excuse in
such

such a Case. To say, it is more than you can spare, or it would hurt your Family, is saying nothing: For, if you detain what belongs to another, you detain what is not your own; and consequently can have no Right to it at all, how convenient soever it might be for you, or your Family to keep it. Nay, even giving some Part of it, or all of it, to the Poor, will not do in the present Case. For while there is another Owner, the Poor have no Right to it. And consequently you must not think of excusing your Guilt, by making them the innocent Accomplices and Receivers. All that can be allowed in such a Case is this, viz. That while you are making the *full* Restitution, you may conceal your Name and Person, if you think proper. But even this ought not to be done, if an innocent Person is suspected of your Crime, and cannot otherwise be cleared. For you must restore his Character by confessing your own Guilt, as well as by making Reparation for the original Injury.

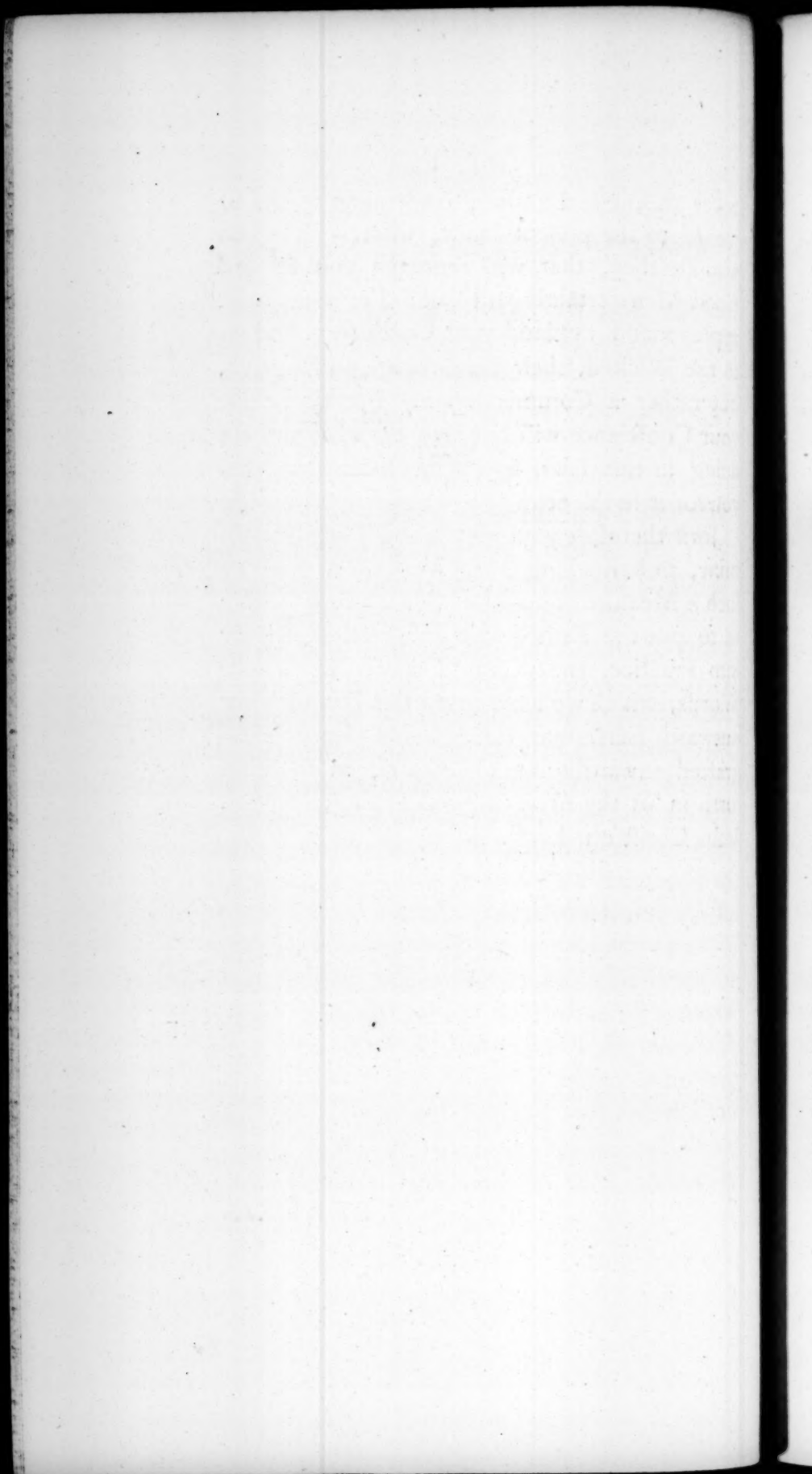
In all other Cases, where Money cannot make a Reparation, you must endeavour to undo what has been done amiss, as much as possible: And a contrary Behaviour must indicate the Sense you have of your past Errors, and your hearty Desires to retrieve them. In some Cases this is all that *can* be done; and therefore is all that ought to be expected. But in others, where begging Pardon, and intreating Forgiveness are
also

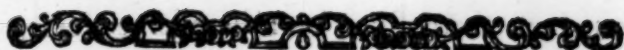
also necessary, they ought to be performed: For no Method should be left unattempted on our Part, to induce the injured Person to be reconciled to us, and to forgive us: And if you scruple at the doing this, you scruple the Performance of such Duties, as are necessary for the Saving of your Soul.

In one Word, to pretend to Repentance without Restitution is mere Grimace and Hypocrisy. For where we have committed an Injury, and will not make all the Amends; and all the Reparations we are able, how can we be said to repent of it? And what Name is black enough for such a Crime? Indeed the Plea of Inconvenience, of hurting our Families, or of hurting our Characters, and of the Shame of making a public Recantation, and the like, might serve tolerably well, if there were no Hereafter. But since the Case is otherwise, and Matters are brought to this Dilemma, either to suffer Loss, and to take Shame in this Life, or in the next;--- which do you think is the best Alternative? And if you knew, that the Judgment-Day was just at hand, and that you was directly summoned to appear, which would you chuse?---Is this a Point on which you can hesitate?---Or would you even run the Risque of any Danger in such a Case? As to the temporary *Loss* attending Restitution, this will amply be repaid by the eternal Possession of those Treasures, which
never

never fail, but are always encreasing: And in regard to the present *Shame*, what is it? And who are they, that will reproach you for it? Good Men certainly will not: For they must approve and applaud your Conduct. And as to the Wicked, their Censures are no Disgrace, but rather a Commendation. But above all, your Conscience will approve of what you are doing in this Life, and your God will reward you for it in the next.

JOIN therefore your Hearts and Tongues with mine, in beseeching Almighty God to grant us such a Measure of his Holy Spirit as may enable us to put the Truths here delivered effectually into Practice, and without Delay;---so that the Words, which we have heard this Day with our outward Ears, may through his Grace be so grafted inwardly in our Hearts, as to bring forth in us the Fruit of good Living, through Jesus Christ our Lord.





S E R M O N XI.

MATTHEW XV. 9.

*Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments
of Men.*



IT was the Design of that pious Man, Mr. COLSTON, who first instituted these *Lent* Discourses, that certain Subjects should be treated on in Rotation, as being either more suitable to this particular Season; or else not so eligible for prudential Reasons, to be treated on at another Season, or in another Place, before a private parochial Congregation. I have already endeavoured to conform to his Plan in several Respects: And I shall now proceed to consider another of the Subjects, which he proposed, viz. The Errors and Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*. Now

THESE Words of the Text are so applicable to the State and Condition of that Church, which glories in her Shame, in teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, that the very mentioning of the one seems to bring to our Minds the Idea of the other. For the whole Superstructure of the Church of *Rome* is so visibly built on the sandy Foundation of

C c

human

human Traditions, that the Weakness and Unsoundness thereof can be no longer concealed: It being now evident to almost every Beholder, that the Builders of this Edifice did not intend to erect it upon a Gospel-Basis, that Rock of Christ, which would never fail. I say, this is now evident almost to all; tho' it was not so heretofore. And the Reason is this: Because it is now in the Power of almost every Person, without Fear or Danger, to lay open the very Foundation-Stones, and to examine the rotten Materials of this tottering Pile of Building. Whereas in former Times the Case was far otherwise: For while the Dread of Croisadoes, and of all Kinds of Persecution, hung over Men's Heads like a Cloud ready to burst upon them, if they dared to make the least Enquiry; and while Fire and Faggot stopt up all Approaches towards Knowledge,—Ignorance was then their only Safety. And the more Mankind wrapt themselves up in a stupid implicit Faith, the fitter they were accounted, and indeed the fitter they were of themselves, to be employed as the Buttresses or Supporters of that Church. But, blessed be God, the Times are greatly altered: For the glorious Light of the Reformation, which at first only enlightened a small Portion of the benighted World, is now extending its Influence, and chasing away the Darkness of Error and Superstition on every Side. Nay, in those
very

very Countries, where Men's Minds were so long bound up by the Fetters of the Inquisition; even these Men are now bursting their Chains asunder, and recovering by Degrees their native Liberty of judging and acting for themselves. Even they are throwing off no inconsiderable Part of the Tyranny and Vassalage of the Church of *Rome*: And they seem disposed to regard the rest of her Adulterations with so little Reverence, or rather with such an apparent Contempt, that we may venture to pronounce, they will still go farther than they have hitherto done. Now such a Change of Affairs ought to be a Matter of great Thanksgiving to every Well-wisher to the Purity and Sincerity of the Gospel; because it may prove a signal Blessing to Mankind, if properly used, and rightly improved. But on the contrary, as there is a Danger of abusing this, like every other Favour, I shall therefore endeavour to shew in the following Discourse, what Conduct we Protestants ought to pursue at the present Juncture; and what Treatment is the fittest for us to use towards the Members of the Church of *Rome*, both for their Sakes, and for our own.

Now, in order to do this the better, I shall consider Popery in two distinct Points of View, viz.

1st. As containing gross Errors in Religion: And 2dly, as propagating dangerous Principles in regard to the Peace and Safety of the State.

THE first Charge against Popery is, that it contains several gross Errors in Religion; the principal of which I shall now lay before you, viz.

1. Praying in an unknown Tongue.

Now this is so evidently the Commandment of Men, and not the Doctrine of the Gospel, that it would be a mere Waste of Time to set about the proving it. And when the Apostle St. Paul said, that he would—not only pray with the Spirit, but pray with the *Understanding* also;—did he, do you think, mean to say, that he would pray in a Language, which he did not *understand*?

2. THE denying the People the Use of the Scripture is another great Error in Religion.

THIS again must be the Commandment of Men, because it can be nothing else. For Christ and his Apostles did not refuse to speak to, and converse with, People of all Ranks and Conditions, in their native Language; nay, they sought all Occasions of doing it. And yet the Scriptures are nothing more than the Words of Christ and his Apostles put into Writing; and by that Means communicated to us in later Ages, thro' the Sense of *seeing*; which Words were originally conveyed to the Contemporaries of Christ, and his Apostles thro' the Organs of *Hearing*.

3. A third great Error is, the Praying to departed Saints, as other Mediators, besides the one only Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. For whether this be done in Opposition to, or in Conjunction with, or even in Subordination to, the all sufficient Intercession of our Redeemer; it is equally evident, that the Doctrine itself can have no Foundation in the Gospel. If in Opposition to the Mediation of Christ, it is Blasphemy;---if in Conjunction with, it is a great Impiety; because it supposes *his* Mediation to be not sufficient of itself. And if in Subordination to, it must at least be *unnecessary*; because not required, and therefore superstitious. It must also be displeasing to Almighty God, because we have no Reason to think, that such departed Saints can assist us; because we are no where told, that they will assist us; and because we are expressly enjoined to guard against the intruding into the Worship of God all Schemes of voluntary, false Humility, and the worshipping of Angels.

4. TRANSUBSTANTIATION, which is the supposed Change of a little Piece of Bread into that whole actual Body and Blood of our Lord, which hung upon the Cross, is another glaring Absurdity. This Error,---or shall I rather say, this Phrensy, is so great, that one is at a Loss how to describe it. To call it a Miracle, is to say, that what had the Taste, the Properties, and every Appearance of Bread, before

before Consecration, hath, after Consecration, the Taste, the Properties, and every Appearance of Flesh, even of human Flesh and Blood. For every Miracle is an Appeal to the Senses. And yet the Romanists themselves do not pretend to say, that this is the Case. They call it a Miracle; and yet all their Senses perpetually declare, that it is no Miracle; because the same Bread is Bread still, to all Appearance, and hath noother Taste, Property, or Quality, than what it had before. Thus therefore do they teach *THAT strange Fancy* for a Doctrine, nay for one of the most important Doctrines in the whole Christian Religion; which, if it were true, would lead us to disbelieve, or at least to doubt, all the rest. For if we are not to believe our Senses, in the plainest Case imaginable, and where we have every Means of Information in our Power; what are we to believe? And how shall we know, but that every Thing about us may be all Deception and Illusion? The Bible itself, if that were the Case (I speak with very different Sentiments) may be a Stone, may be a Block of Wood, or a Piece of Metal, for any Thing we know to the contrary. And while we are disputing about the Sense of those Words, *This is my Body*, those Words themselves may have never existed; or they may have signified any Thing, or every Thing whatever.

5. Purgatory.

Now

A lucrative Doctrine this! Wherein the Church of *Rome* teaches her Members to believe, that, besides Heaven and Hell, (the only Places mentioned in the Scriptures) there is a third for Souls departed this Life, called Purgatory; and that the Church is entrusted with the Privilege of shortening the Imprisonment of those who are confined in this Place of Torment;---which Favour of releasing these Prisoners, and remitting their Punishment, is to be bought for Money, as openly, and as avowedly as any Merchandize whatever. I will therefore say nothing more on this Head; but shall leave every one to judge from this Circumstance alone, whether such a Doctrine, so partial to the Rich, and so reprobating to the Poor, can come from God? Or whether the Church of *Rome* doth not here speak from herself?

6. Works of Merit, and of Supererogation, are another shocking Instance of human Adulations.

Now any Man of a common Share of Modesty, not to say of Christian Piety and Humility, could hardly be brought to believe, from a Review of his Actions, that he has a Merit towards God;---much less that he has a Surplus of that Merit, called a Work of Supererogation. And the very Light of Nature would induce him to think, that God doth not want the best of his Services, for his own Sake, as

if

if they were of any Advantage to the Almighty: And consequently, that whatever Reward God shall be pleased to bestow upon him in a future State, he will do it voluntarily and gratuitously; not as a Matter of Debt;---not as what in Justice or Equity he was bound to do;---but as a Matter of free Grace and Favour. And if the Religion of Nature teaches this, surely of all Things whatever, the Gospel of Christ was not calculated to nurse up Mankind in a proud Conceit of the Merit of their own Performances: Nor doth the Doctrine of the Cross (that Pillar of Christianity) give the least Encouragement to suppose, that any Man could redeem his own Soul, much less the Souls of others by meriting or atoning for them.

7. THE Doctrine of Indulgences is another capital Error of the Church of *Rome*. For this is a vile Traffic between Priest and People;---whereby the People are made to believe, that Pardon can be obtained for all their Sins, without the Formality of a regular Repentance; provided they shall visit such or such Churches, assist at such or such Processions; or do such other Works of public Ostentation, as carry little, if any, Proofs of a sincere Contrition and Reformation of Life.

8. Another Corruption of the Church of *Rome* is, the Claim which she makes to the working of Miracles:—A Claim which she asserts

asserts to this very Day. And her chief Defenders are weak enough to alledge this Circumstance as one Proof of her being the only true Church. Now we know, that the Miracles recorded in the Old Testament were wrought to prove, that the great Jehovah the God of *Israel* was the only true God both of Heaven and Earth; and that the Gods of the Nations were nothing at all:---We know also, that the Miracles recorded in the New Testament were intended to prove, that our Saviour Christ was the true Messiah, so long foretold of old;---and that therefore we need not look for another. Now these were important Articles, worthy of the Interposition of an Almighty Power. And what is still more, they were such Points of Doctrine, as hardly admitted at that Juncture, of any other Proof but that of Miracles. But what shall we say of these modern Miracles? And what are they to prove? They are not to prove either of the Points above mentioned;---the Unity of the Godhead,---or the Mission of Christ:---For they are proved already. They are not to prove, that the Church of *Rome* is the only true Church, and that the Protestant Church is false: For they dare not put the Matter upon that Issue. They dare not attempt to work Miracles in public for the Confutation of Heretics; nor to appeal to us Protestants, as Christ and his Apostles did to the *Jews* and

Pagans, whether we can disprove the Truth of such Pretensions. No:—All the Miracles, which they pretend to work, are either done in secret, within some Convent, and before chosen Witnesses prepared for the Purpose:---Or else if undertook to be exhibited in Public (like the annual Liquefaction of the Blood of St. *Januarius* at *Naples*) they are screened from the Danger of a public Examination: For the Miracle Operator is surrounded by a Number of proper Persons to keep off all those that would pry into, or could detect the Cheat. Yet with all this Caution, the Affair itself is sinking into Contempt and Derision every Day: And the more sensible Part of the *Romish* Communion themselves scruple not to declare, that they are ashamed of such impudent Frauds, and bare-faced Impostures.

THERE are besides these several other grievous Errors taught and practised in the Church of *Rome*: But certainly there is no Need to mention them all: And what has been already alledged, is abundantly sufficient to prove, that this Church is a very corrupt one, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.

BUT yet corrupt as it is, and grievous as these Errors are, there is nothing in the Nature of them (except the Forbidding the Laity the Use of the Scriptures, which Prohibition is now altogether obsolete) which tends to infringe the Liberties of
other

other People. They are Corruptions, it is true: But they are not Violences offered to the Conscience: And therefore as I am left free to judge, and act as I please, in relation to them; I ought, if I would act consistently with myself, and do as I would be done by---I ought to grant the same Liberty to others. In short, the Members of the Church of *Rome*, if they taught nothing but such Extravagances as these, would have a just Right to our Pity and Indulgence; for Errors in Religion ought not to call down our Resentment, but our Compassion: And the only proper Course to be taken in such a Case, is first to pray to God for the Conversion of these deluded Souls; and then to strive to convert them by all those Arguments and Topics of Persuasion, which a Knowledge, animated by an holy Zeal, and a Zeal guided by a Christian Knowledge, can suggest and recommend.

WHEREFORE pass we on now to consider Popery in another Light, viz.

2. As propagating such Doctrines, and Commandments of Men, as are dangerous to the Peace and Safety of the State.

Now the first of these is the Supremacy of the Pope: Which is said to consist in a direct Dominion over all Christians as to Spirituals, and an indirect or consequential Dominion as to Temporals. Would you know from whence this extensive Claim of Supremacy is derived?---It is

from *St. Peter*. Tho' *St. Peter* himself never claimed it: And *St. Paul* withstood him to his Face; and *St. Peter* never said, that he had the Care of all the Churches: But *St. Paul* did say so; and actually exercised a Jurisdiction over them in all Respects, as you may read in the History of the Acts of the Apostles, and in his several Epistles to the Churches of *Corinth*, *Galatia*, *Ephesus*, *Theſſalonica*, and so on;---not omitting the Church of *Rome* itself. Nay more, it doth not appear from Scripture that *St. Peter* ever was at *Rome*, tho' Events of much less Consequence to the Christian Church are there recorded with a circumstantial Exactness:---and still much less can it be made to appear, that he appointed a Successor in that City, and created him Vicar General over the Church of Christ to succeed him, and to continue a Succession to the End of the World. Yet weak as this Foundation is, upon this and no other was built what came next in Course, viz.

2. THE Power of the Pope to depose Emperors, Kings, and Princes; to free their Subjects from their Oaths and Obligations of Allegiance; and to give their Empires, Kingdoms, and Territories to whomsoever he pleased. And as if this was not enough, upon the same Stock is grafted the other Tenet of the *Romish* Church, viz.

3dly. THAT

3dly. THAT Force is lawful, and ought to be used in Matters of Religion:---Nay, that no other Sect, or System of Opinions, ought to be tolerated in any Christian State, but the Sect and System of the Church of *Rome*:---Moreover that it is the Duty of Christian Rulers to extirpate all others by Fire and Sword, and by every other Instrument of Cruelty, or Method of Oppression:---And that, in short, the Plea of Conscience is not to be admitted wherever the Members of this Church happen to be the strongest, and can enforce Obedience.

SUCH Notions as these, it is evident to every one, are dangerous to Society. They are inconsistent with the Peace, and Safety, and Liberties of Mankind; and therefore while they are believed, and maintained by any considerable Number, surely every State, and every Society, has a Right to guard against them. It has a Right, because it has a Right to defend itself; and because the Principle of Self-Preservation is the first Law of all created Beings.

Now it was upon this Principle of Self-Defence, and this only, that our sanguinary Laws against Popery were first made, or could afterwards be vindicated. They were made at three different Periods, viz. during the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*,--during the Reign of the *Stuarts*,--and soon after the Revolution. And whosoever is the least conversant with our
English

English History, can easily see the particular Reasons for enacting such Laws at each of those Junctures: Reasons which, God be praised, subsist no longer: For now it cannot be pretended, that we have either the internal, or external Reasons which then subsisted. Internally we have no Disputes about a Popish Pretender, or a Popish Successor, to the Crown. Externally we have nothing to fear either from the House of *Austria*, or the House of *Bourbon*, as the Executioners of the Pope's Decrees. Nay these very Princes have,—not only disagreed with him, but have treated his Ecclesiastical Power with the highest Insult and Contempt. And so low is this Part of Popery now fallen, that the Head of the See of *Rome*, provoked as he is, dares not have Recourse to the Weapons of his former Warfare, Bulls and Excommunications. For were he now to pretend to depose Princes, and to dispose of their Kingdoms, he would excite,—not the Fear and Dread,—but the Contempt, the Scorn and Derision of all the World. That this is the Fact and real State of the Case is evident to a Demonstration: For even the most bigotted Papists themselves are no longer Papists in this Respect:—They disown his Authority; they treat it as an Usurpation, formerly indeed submitted to, but now happily thrown off:—And he himself is so conscious of his Weakness, that
he

he dares not revive his former Pretensions. Nay what is still more, the Catholic Powers, and the Members of the Church of *Rome* in general, are now not at all averſe to a Toleration of Proteſtants in Popiſh Countries: They have taken ſome Steps towards it already; and they are in a Train of taking many more; ſo that Perſecution on Account of Religion is happily in a fair Way of being baniſhed from off the Earth.

Now, laying all theſe Things together, what ſhall we ſay in regard to ourſelves? And what Conduct is the fitteſt for us to purſue at the preſent Juncture? We formerly enacted very ſevere Laws againſt Popery. But why were they enacted? Not with a View to perſecute, but to defend ourſelves againſt Perſecution. And as long as the Principle of Self-Defence and Self-Preſervation would juſtify the Execution of thoſe Laws, ſo long we might be juſtified intreating the Papiſts with Severity;—but no longer: For I will be bold to ſay, that whatever Proteſtant goes beyond this Boundary of Self-Defence, is a Papiſt himſelf, in the very worſt Senſe of that Word;—whatever Zeal he may expreſs in the *Proteſtant Cauſe*.

THE Question therefore comes to this: Can the Principles of Self-Defence and Self-Preſervation juſtify the Continuance of ſuch Laws among us, after the Reaſons or Motives are happily

happily ceased, which caused them to be first enacted? If they can, we do right to continue these penal Statutes still in Force: But if they cannot, it is demonstrable, that all persecuting Laws against every Sect ought to be repealed, as being a Scandal to the Legislature, and repugnant to every sound Maxim of Policy in the State, and to every Principle of true Religion in the Church.

BUT while I am thus pleading the Cause of *universal Toleration*, as a Matter of *universal Right*, I would not be so understood, as if I made no Distinction between Matters of *Right*, and Matters of *Favour*. For there appears to me to be a very essential Difference between them: And it by no Means follows, that I ought to grant *Favours* to every Man, to whom I am bound to do *Justice*.

BUT waving the Consideration of that Point at present; and to sum up all in a few Words: As *Englishmen*, we ought to embrace every proper Occasion of shewing ourselves the true and *consistent* Friends of Liberty:---As *Protestants*, we should allow that Right of private Judgment to others, which we glory in ourselves, and which indeed is no other, than an universal Right belonging to all Mankind:---And lastly, as *Christians* at large, we should pity the Infirmities and Indiscretions of a weak Brother, and never put unnecessarily a stumbling Block, or a
Rock

Rock of Offence in such an one's Way: And after we have done this, we should prove to him the superior Excellence of our own national Church, by that most prevalent of all persuasive Arguments, a winning Behaviour, a good Life, and an exemplary Conversation.

... of ...
... we have ...
... the ...
... of ...
... of ...
... of ...



S E R M O N XII.

MAT. xv—9.

*Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments
of Men.*

IT has been too general a Practice with Mankind in all Ages either to *add* to, or *diminish* from, the express Doctrines and Duties of true Religion. If Men are disposed to add to them, this intended Augmentation arises from a superstitious Turn of Mind, whereby such Persons are led to judge of the Deity, according to their own Feelings and Inclinations, and to suppose, that the Divine Being must be pleased with the same Overflowings of ceremonious Pomp and Adulation, which are so delightful to themselves. But if they should be addicted to *diminish* from the divine Standard of true Religion, this Evil proceeds from that Irksomeness and Unwillingness which they feel in themselves towards *believing* or *practising* those salutary Truths, which are disgusting to their corrupted Appetites and

Passions. And it is very observable, that the same Persons are often guilty of running into both Extremes :---Superstitiously adding to, and at the same Time profanely endeavouring to, take from the Precepts of Truth and Piety. Nay indeed, the same Reason will account for both Parts of so opposite a Conduct :---Men are generally desirous of being *excused* from the Belief of those Doctrines, and the Practice of those Duties, for which they have no Relish; but are very willing to add certain others of their own Invention, by Way of Equivalent or Compensation.

AND this was the very Case of those Jews, who were referred to in the Text. For though they were abounding in some Respects, they wished and hoped to obtain an Indulgence of being deficient in others. They were desirous of introducing *new* Observances, such as the washing of Cups and Tables; but at the same Time they were for cancelling the *old* Obligation of honouring and relieving their Parents. Thus did they make the Word of God of none Effect by their Traditions;—teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, in both Respects;—that is, by *inventing* such Opinions and Practices as had no Foundation in the Word of God, and by *omitting* those that had.

AND what was the Case of the Jews formerly, is no less so at present among too many Christians

Christians of all Denominations. Particularly the Church of *Rome* has unhappily adopted this Jewish Spirit both of imposing and retrenching to that Degree, that the whole Body of the Christian Dispensation, as maintained by that Church in one of her celebrated Creeds*, seems to be greatly changed both in Faith and Practice from what it was originally designed to be.

HENCE therefore we may easily perceive, how incumbent it is for us all to be upon our guard against admitting any human Adulterations to mix with, much less to supersede, the pure and genuine Word of Truth, which alone is able to save our Souls. Human Inventions are very apt to introduce themselves into all Affairs which concern Religion: They will present themselves before the Lord, as Satan did (in the Book of *Job*) when he endeavoured to pass for one of the Sons of God. But human Inventions will certainly be detected, when fairly brought to the Test; because they cannot bear the Purifying seven Times in the Fire: The Dross and impure Mixture will be discovered by these Means, and necessarily consumed. On the other Hand, whatsoever shall be found to remain unhurt and undiminished, after such a fiery Trial, ought certainly to be the more re-

* The Creed of Pope *Pius IV.* Anno 1564.
verenced

verenced by all true Christians ; as having been proved to be the genuine, unadulterated Word of God.

THIS Observation is applicable to many Instances in Religion, respecting both Faith and Practice. But I shall at present wholly confine it to the Examination of the Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. And my Reason for doing it is, because it hath been of late most confidently and repeatedly asserted, that the Doctrine of the Trinity cannot bear a fair and ingenuous Trial ;---nay, that it is so very absurd, that it is not possible to defend it on any other Principles or Maxims, but such as would serve equally well to defend the Belief of Transubstantiation, and the grossest Absurdities of the Church of *Rome*.

Now this is a Point which deserves to be particularly enquired into. And as there are certain Trials to be made upon a Doctrine, which will prove no Prejudice to the Truth, nay, will become of the greatest Advantage to it ;---so we are to consider at present, whether the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity can support itself under that Sort of Examination, which would prove so detrimental to the Belief of Transubstantiation, and to any other fundamental Errors.

I. THEREFORE, the first Ground of Doubt, that the Point in Question is of human Invention, is, *When it clashes with the Principles*

of

of Reason in all similar Cases, and the Evidence of common Sense. In such a Situation we surely have just Grounds to suspect, or rather, we should absolutely reject the Point in Question; because the Proofs *for* it, can never be so numerous and cogent as the Proofs *against* it. I have no other Grounds or Evidence, that the Bible itself is the Word of God, but what arises from the Conviction of my Reason, and the Testimony of my Senses;---the Grace of God co-operating with and assisting the proper Use of those Faculties. It would therefore be highly inconsistent in me, to give Credit to any Proposition supposed to be maintained in that Book, which must necessarily destroy the Authority of the Book itself. Both these cannot stand together; and the one, or other of them must give Way.

To apply this to the Confutation of that absurd Tenet in the Church of *Rome*, called *Transubstantiation*; wherein it is maintained, that the sacred Elements of Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper are really and truly changed, or converted into that identical Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which hung upon the Cross. The Evidence of Sense and Reason is here directly contradicted in respect to every Faculty with which God hath endowed us, whether of judging, seeing, tasting, or feeling. And yet these very Faculties, and these very Senses,

Senses, which must all be renounced in order to believe the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, are the only Evidence which those of the Romish Communion can pretend to appeal to, when they endeavour to prove that Doctrine to be contained in the Scriptures, or handed down by Tradition in the Church. In one Word, they require us to believe the Report of our Reason, and the Evidence of our Senses in *seeing, hearing, and judging* of the Terms made use of to express the Proposition; but to disbelieve them all, when we come to hear, see, or judge of the Matter of Fact thus asserted or maintained:---Though they cannot but acknowledge, that Bread and Wine,---and Flesh and Blood, are in all Respects whatever as much the Objects of our Senses, as Paper and Letters, Sounds and Words, by which the Notion of Transubstantiation must be expressed.

HERE then is a palpable Case, wherein the Doctrine will not bear a fair and ingenuous Examination: The Marks of Error and Delusion are upon it; because it evidently clashes with the clearest Testimony of Reason and common Sense. Let this therefore be discarded by every impartial and sincere Enquirer; as having no better an Origin than the Commandments of Men.

BUT what if there should be a Case, wherein our Reason and Senses are *not able* to judge of
the

the Nature of the Fact? What if it should happen to be one of those Objects (and many such there are) which are too great and disproportioned for our limited human Faculties to comprehend? If this should be the Case, it is plain, that the former Rule is not applicable to it; and therefore we must have Recourse to some other Test or Criterion, in order to judge and determine concerning any Proposition of this Sort. Now it is at least very *possible*, that a Proposition may be so clearly worded, that we may be able to understand the Thing signified, or intended to be expressed, easily enough, though we have no Manner of Conception of the Mode of performing it. If, for Example, any Person commissioned from God, should reveal to us an important Fact, that a certain Number of those blessed and spiritual Beings, called ANGELS, were employed in the Service of Mankind, and in Consequence thereof were sent from Place to Place, and did frequently converse and consult with each other, in order to accomplish or carry into Execution this good Work and Labour of Love; we should have no Difficulty in conceiving the Intent and Purport of these benevolent Actions, tho' we cannot form the least Idea of their Manner of doing them; that is, of their moving from Place to Place, or of their seeing, hearing, and conversing with each other. Those glorious Beings have put off their earthly Tabernacles

F f

bernacles, if they ever had any ; and they are
 now pure immaterial Spirits. But what is a
 Spirit ? And with what Limbs, Instruments, or
 Organs doth a Spirit move from Place to Place ?
 Or hath he any at all ?---Moreover *how* doth he
 perform those several Functions, which we de-
 scribe by the Terms *seeing, hearing, or conversing*
 with each other ? Alas ! we know not a Tittle
 of this Matter : And if we will ingenuously de-
 clare the Truth, we must confess that such a
 Knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for
 us, and that we cannot attain unto it. Nay
 more, were it to be revealed to us, that those
 Beings, who people the several Globes around
 us, the Sun, Moon, and the Stars, are material
 Beings with immaterial Souls like ourselves ;
 but nevertheless that they are of a bodily For-
 mation, or corporeal Construction, quite diffe-
 rent from any Creature inhabiting our Globe ;
 we should be as much at a Loss to conceive the
 Manner of their performing the several Func-
 tions of Life, and of their exercising their re-
 spective Faculties and Powers of Mind, as we
 are in conceiving those of Angels. And yet,
 tho' we are thus at a Loss in framing an Idea
 how such Intelligencies as the Inhabitants of
 Heaven, and the Inhabitants of the Stars and
 Planets, do live, move, and have their Being ;
 we make no Doubt of the Matter of Fact :—

And

And we reason very readily and consequentially from this Fact, as a Point already granted, and not to be called in Question.

In short, all these Cases are a few Examples out of many, which might be produced, of Things which are beyond our Reach, and above our Comprehension. And they necessarily lead us to one grand and general Conclusion, viz. That there may be many Things in the wide Circle of Nature, which are *above* our Reason to explain,---and yet *not contrary* to any of its just Decisions. A Thing may extend itself beyond the Line of my Understanding, and therefore in such a Case, I ought to determine nothing about such Parts of it, which exceed the Limits of my Powers. It is enough, that I know such Things there are, or *may be*; but how they exist, or how many, or how few, they are in Number, I cannot tell.

Now, to apply this Train of Reasoning to the Case of the ever-blessed Trinity,---and to the aforementioned Doctrine of Transubstantiation: The first Thing which strikes me is, that the Nature of the one has no Affinity with, and not the least Resemblance to, the Nature of the other. In the Subject of the Trinity, I must expect to find an Object infinitely too vast for my finite Comprehension, because every Thing relating to the Godhead is undoubtedly so. But as to the Case of Transubstantiation, I do not

expect to meet with such Difficulty; because the Object is there as much on a Level with my Capacities, as any Thing in Nature can possibly be. Whether therefore three distinct Persons can subsist together in one undivided Essence, is a Question which my Reason cannot resolve; because I cannot by searching find out God, I cannot find out the Almighty to Perfection:— But whether a Piece of Bread is not a Piece of Flesh, I can resolve, because I know the usual Properties of both.

THERE may therefore be some certain *Union*, and also a *peculiar Distinction* in the Nature of the Godhead, of which we could have had no Intimation, unless the Doctrine had been expressly revealed. And now after it is revealed, we can conceive no Idea of the *Manner* or *Mode* of these Existences;—tho' we may, as in the afore-mentioned Case of Angels, and of the Inhabitants of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, very firmly believe the Fact. This, to me at least, appears to be a plain and obvious Case;—indeed so very plain, and at the same Time so very important, that were the contrary to be admitted, as the Rule of acting, that is, were we to believe nothing but what we could perfectly comprehend, not only our Stock of Knowledge in all the Branches of Learning would be shrunk up to nothing, but even the Affairs of common Life could not be carried on.

INDEED,

INDEED, if it had been asserted, that each Person in the Trinity was a distinct and separate Substance, and yet that all the three were but one undivided Substance, this would have been such a Contradiction in Terms, as ought to be rejected. Moreover, if it had been maintained that each Person was only a distinct Mode of one and the same Substance, this would not have amounted to any Distinction of Persons at all, *Modes* being only different Conceptions of the same Being appearing in different Lights. * But

* A late Writer attempts to be arch and witty on this Head. He insinuates, "that if the three Persons in the Trinity are not so much as three distinct Substances, and yet more than three distinct Modes; they must be three distinct *Somewhats*." True: And this is the very Case, which must always happen, more or less, when we reason or conjecture about such Subjects, whose Natures we do not perfectly comprehend. Angels are *Somewhats*; the Inhabitants of the Sun, Moon, and Stars are *Somewhats*. And in regard to this Globe, which we ourselves inhabit, the Phenomena of Gravitation, Cohesion, Electricity, Magnetism, &c. &c. &c. are all *Somewhats*: Nay, in this Sense, it may be truly and justly affirmed, that the Great God himself is *Somewhat*; that is, we believe that he is, tho' we cannot comprehend the Mode of his Existence. We believe also, that he is an infinite, eternal, and omnipresent Being, filling all in all. But what is Infinity? Eternity? — Or Omnipresence? Let others explain these awful Mysteries, if they can: For my Part, I will not attempt to do it. And yet I do as sincerely and religiously believe the Fact, that the Great God is an infinite, eternal, and omnipresent Being, as I do any Fact whatever: And, by the Grace of God, I will ever rejoice in the Comfort of this Belief. It is a Pity that the Composer of the Athanasian Creed (whoever he was) had not rested satisfied with *general* Assertions, instead of entering into *particular* Explications of what at last must be confessed to be INEXPLICABLE.

if

if there be a Medium between Modes and Substances, so that the Term Person, *in this Place*, may signify less than a distinct Substance, and yet more than a distinct Mode; what can we say to the contrary? And how can any Man disprove it? Such a Distinction therefore there *may be*;—for it is only the *bare Possibility* of the Thing which is *here* contended for; and yet not be contrary to our Reason, tho' it be exceedingly above it. Consequently such a Doctrine, as that of the Trinity, is not to be rejected, as clashing with the Dictates of Sense and Reason, like the former Doctrine of Transubstantiation; because this doth not clash with them, but only exceeds them, and soars too high for them to reach.

BUT II. Another Characteristic, which would render any Opinion very dubious and suspicious, is, *When the Proofs alledged for it, are not clearly revealed, but are drawn from dark and obscure Expressions, or built on figurative Allusions, and seem to run counter to the general Scope of much plainer Passages.* I say, such a Circumstance as this would render any Doctrine very dubious and suspicious in the Judgment of a cool, impartial Man. And yet this is actually the Case with the Church of *Rome* in respect to the Pillar of all her Greatness, the *Supremacy of St. Peter over the rest of the Apostles.* The only Text which the Champions of that Church can bring in Support of this Encroachment or Usurpation

is the following. "Thou art *Peter* (alias "Rock) [*Matt.* xvi. 18.] and upon this Rock "I will build my Church. And the Gates "of Hell shall not prevail against it. And "I will give unto thee the Keys of the King- "dom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt "bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven: And "whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be "loosed in Heaven." Such a Passage might indeed have served as a tolerably strong Foundation for their vast Fabric to be erected on, had there been other Passages of Scripture for strengthening and supporting the Superstructure. But alas! Seeing it stands alone, unconnected with, and unsupported by any other, it is by much too feeble for sustaining that ponderous and immense Edifice both of Faith and Practice, which the Romanists have laid upon it. For the very Words themselves do fairly imply no more, than that Christ was pleased with the Confession of Faith, which *St. Peter* had uttered just before: *Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God.* And therefore our Saviour promises, that *St. Peter* should have the Honour of laying the Foundation-Stone both of the Jewish, and Gentile Church, agreeably to this Confession. Which Event, we read in the first Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, came to pass respecting the Jews; and, in the tenth Chapter, respecting the Gentiles. And the Passages, thus under-

understood, imply no Manner of Supremacy, Authority, or Jurisdiction of *St. Peter* over the rest of the Apostles;---much less, that such an exorbitant Power, as is claimed by that Church, should descend to his pretended Successors, the Popes of *Rome*.

BUT this is not all :---For the whole Scope of our Saviour's last Instructions to his Disciples runs counter to the Romish Interpretation. And if we will be at the Pains to trace this Affair throughout the Gospels, we shall find, that each and every Apostle was invested with the Authority of binding and loosing, of remitting Sins or retaining them, of preaching, praying, working Miracles, ordaining Elders, and in short of governing the Church in every Respect, equally with *St. Peter* himself. By the Tenor of their Commission it is evident, that they were all independent of him, and he of them. And the general Promise made to them all, that Christ would be with them always, even unto the End of the World, is surely equally strong and comprehensive with that made to *St. Peter*, that the Gates of Hell should not prevail against the Church.

BUT farther, we find that the Apostles understood this Promise made to *St. Peter* in a Light very different from what the Romanists do at present; otherwise how could *St. Paul* have said of the Church, that it was *built on the Foundation*

Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets? Whereas he should have said, according to this Hypothesis, that it was built on the Foundation of *St. Peter* only. Moreover how dared he to have withstood *St. Peter* to his Face, and to say, *that he was to be blamed?* Whereas *St. Peter* was infallible, and his Superior, and accountable to none but God. Again, if the Romish Interpretation had been the true one, what Arrogance would it have been in *St. Paul* to have said, that HE had the Care of all the Churches? Whereas this Care and Superintendency was the peculiar Province of *St. Peter*. And, to sum up all, how came this bold Intruder to direct a Canonical Epistle to the *Romish Church* itself, [the Epistle to the *Romans*] the very See of *St. Peter*, from whence he was to exercise his Jurisdiction over the whole Christian World.

THEREFORE, for these several Reasons, and for many others, the Plea and Pretence for *St. Peter's* Supremacy seems to be very ill grounded. It is built on a single Passage, not very explicit in itself, and abounding with Metaphors: It is unsupported by other Scriptures; and it runs counter to the whole Tenor and Design of many Places, much more clear and determinate in their Signification. These are such Circumstances as would render any Doctrine dubious and uncertain in the Eyes of a candid and impartial Enquirer after Truth.

G g

BUT

BUT none of these Circumstances are applicable to the Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity. The Proofs for that are many, strong, clear, frequently repeated, and much insisted on throughout the Scriptures:---So that were you to begin your Enquiry either from the Name or the Attributes of God;---or from the Homage and Allegiance required to be paid by Man, you would find an abundant Evidence of the Truth of this Position. For Example, should it be enquired, whether the sacred *Name* of God is ever ascribed, in the Scriptures, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost? The Answer is, that it is frequently so ascribed in the most solemn Manner, and in the strictest Acceptation. The Word was God;---God was manifest in the Flesh;---and Christ is over all, God blessed for ever. Moreover, with respect to the Holy Ghost, he his the Spirit of God;---Lying unto him is the same as Lying unto God:---He caused the Virgin *Mary* to conceive by him, whereby our Lord became the Son of God.

SHOULD it be demanded, whether the Attributes, Powers, and Perfections of the Godhead are described as inherent in, or belonging to, the Son and the Holy Spirit? The Answer is, that the Son is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty:---He is equal to the Father:---He knoweth

knoweth all Things:— And when two or three are gathered together in his Name, he is in the midst of them:—He is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever:—Moreover all Things were created by him, and for him:—He upholdeth all Things by the Word of his Power:—In him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge:—He hath Power to forgive Sins; and who can forgive Sins, but God only? He is the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person:—And in him dwelleth all the Fullness of the Godhead bodily.

AND as to the Holy Spirit:—He is the *eternal* Spirit of God:—He searcheth all Things, yea the deep Things of God:—He dwelleth and resideth in us, whereby our Souls and Bodies become the Temples of the living God:—He is the Comforter, who is to guide us into all Truth, and to abide with his Church for ever.

LASTLY, should it be enquired, whether that Homage, Allegiance, and Adoration, which are due to the supreme God, are ever attributed to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit? The Answer is, that the same Honour, Worship, Glory, Supplication, and Thanksgiving, which are due to the Father, are frequently paid to the Son; — and, *by a necessary Implication*, to the Holy Spirit likewise. For all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father:— And let all the Angels of God worship him.

At the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow; ---and all the Saints should call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And in respect to the Holy Spirit, he is so high a Being, and so essentially divine, that a Sin may be committed immediately against him;---nay, the Blasphemies against him are much more heinous in their Nature, than any of those which can be committed against the Father, or the Son. But what is still above all, the very Form of Baptism, the Form of the Dedication of ourselves to God, and of entering into Covenant and Alliance with him, must be in the joint Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:---In Consequence of which, these three divine Persons are to be joint Objects of our Faith and Worship; ---and they, on their Parts, join likewise in sending down the divine Benediction upon us; even the *Grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ,---the *Love* of God,---and the *Fellowship* of the Holy Ghost.

THIS then being the State of the Case with respect to the Scripture-Grounds for believing in the ever blessed Trinity, all Suspicions and Surmisings ought to be banished out of our Minds. For the Doctrine is contained, not in one single Passage, but in many;---not obscurely hinted at, but plainly declared;---not wrapped

up

up in Figures and Metaphors, but expressed in the clearest and strongest Terms. And besides this, there is a great Variety of Circumstances in different Passages of Scripture arising from the Nature and Operations of God, and the Homage and Adoration of Man, all tending to corroborate and support the general Doctrine: So that in short, in such a Case as this, there can be no just Room for *doubting*, much less for *disbelieving*.

BUT III. We may proceed to observe, that any Opinion, may be justly suspected of being at least carried too high;---*If its Advocates should insist upon it, as upon the most fundamental Article of Religion, when its own Nature plainly bespeaks it to be of small Importance.*---I say, in such a Case we have just Cause to suspect;---not that God might not require our Obedience in the most trivial Affair;---but that he should insist on such a Trifle, as if it were a fundamental Article, which at best can only be of a *secondary* Nature, and subservient to something better. And yet such were undeniably most of the Jewish Traditions of Old, and also the Romish Pumps and Ceremonies, with all their Vows, Pilgrimages, and Processions, of later Date. For at best, these Things could be but the under Parts, or as I may say, the Scaffolding of Religion, but not the Essentials of it, or the Fabric itself. When therefore such Matters as
these

these are chiefly insisted on, to the Exclusion, or Degradation of more important Subjects, and when the lesser is thus made to swallow up the greater;---it then becomes a plain Case, either that the whole Doctrine is erroneous, or even if true, that a much greater Value is set upon it, than it really deserves.

Now, when we come to apply this Observation to the Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, it necessarily proves, that such a Doctrine (if true) must be of vast Importance in the Christian System: So that the Rule here laid down, cannot possibly be made to prove the contrary, tho' much Art, and many Attempts have been used to that Intent. For how is it possible, that such a Doctrine as this, should be supposed to bear an Underpart, or be of an *indifferent* Nature? If the Doctrine be true in itself, it is of the last Importance to be assured of the Truth of it: But if it should *not* be true, it is equally of Moment to detect the Falshood: Right Apprehensions of God and his Attributes are the very Foundation of true Religion; they are in Fact the only Ingredients which can constitute *that rational Service*, which is worthy of God to receive, and is the Duty of Man to pay. In short, a capital Error, in regard to such religious Principles, is like setting out totally wrong upon a long Journey; the greater the Progress that is made, the farther is the Traveller from his Journey's End. If we
do

do not *know* the transcendent Dignity of the Son of God, and of his Holy Spirit, how can we ascribe to them the Honour which is due to their Names? And if we are ignorant of their Offices and Relations towards us Men, and which were undertaken for our Salvation, we must necessarily be ignorant of our Obligations towards them on these Accounts. So that upon the whole, and in every Light, it must be allowed, according to every Principle of Reason and Common-Sense, that the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity must be of the utmost Importance to be rightly known, and (if true) firmly believed: *For it cannot be of an indifferent Nature.*

BUT IV. Another Cause of Suspicion will justly arise, *when any worldly or pecuniary Advantage is to be procured, by propagating one Doctrine in Preference to another.* In this Light the Notion of Purgatory, and the Practice of saying Masses for the Dead, and of granting Indulgencies to the Living, look very doubtful and suspicious. Immense, and almost incredible, are the Sums, which have been acquired by inculcating such a Faith. And it is obvious, even to the lowest Capacity, that such Doctrines as these tend to enrich one Class of Men at the Expence of another. But nothing of the like Nature can be objected to the Doctrine of the Trinity. For, whether true or false, both
Clergy

Clergy and Laity share in it alike : And it must be acknowledged, even by its greatest Adversaries, that it has no Tendency in itself either to enrich, or to exalt the Order of the Clergy, at the Expence of the other Members of Society.

WHEREFORE V. and to conclude. The last Ground of Suspicion which I shall mention is, *when the Doctrine in Question, whatever it may happen to be, has a Tendency to relax the Duties of moral Obligation ; or, which is still worse, when it pretends to atone for the Want of them.* Human Nature is very apt to swallow every Bait of this Kind with great Greediness ; and the Church of *Rome* seems to have calculated several of her peculiar Tenets and distinguishing Practices, with a View, as it were, to gratify this depraved Disposition in human Nature. This is spoken, not in the Bitterness of Controversy, but in sober Truth, and with a deep Concern. For alas ! Can it be denied, but that heretofore she has encouraged, and pathetically recommended, various Kinds of Croisades, whenever she had Power and Influence so to do ? Can she now disown, that she is concerned in the infamous Traffic of Indulgencies even to this Day ? Can it be so much as pretended, that she formally disclaims the Virtue or Merit of monastic Vows, of Pilgrimages, of Visiting of Shrines, Images, Relicts, and of many such like Artifices ? Now, I ask, to what Use of rational Morality, and of
true

true Gospel-Piety can these Things possibly serve? And is it not evident to almost every Spectator, that wherever they are practised, they tend to relax the sacred Bonds of moral Obligation? And that the Persons who seem most to be addicted to those outward Superstitions, are observed also to use them by Way of Equivalent or Commutation for the Want of the inward Duties of the Christian Profession?

BUT the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity has no such Tendency: It pretends to no Dispensation from any other known Duty: Nor will the Belief of it atone for the Violation of any one of the least of God's Commandments. It requires indeed a sound Faith; but at the same Time it equally demands the Soundness and Integrity of a Christian Practice. For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, as to the doctrinal Part of it, and yet wilfully and intentionally offend in one Point of the practical, he is guilty of all.

AND thus I have gone through every Part of my intended Examination. The Doctrine of the Trinity (I hope it will be allowed) has been freely and ingenuously tried by every Test, which can discover Truth from Falshood. It has been winnowed by the Shovel and the Fan: And it has likewise been exposed to the severest Experiment of Fire. But what were the Issues of these respective Trials? Why, there was no Chaff to be blown away by the Operation of the

H h

one,

one, nor any Dross to be consumed by the other. The Wheat appeared the cleaner, and the Gold, after having been purified seven Times in the Fire, came out of the Furnace without any Diminution of its Weight. In short, Truth appears the brighter, and acquires a new Lustre by a free and candid Examination; but Falshood hides its Head, and disappears like the Night fleeing before the rising Sun.

WHAT remains therefore, but that we sincerely and unfeignedly believe the Doctrine, which has been proved to be so worthy of our Belief; and which comes recommended to us by so many Tests and Trials?—And if to the Orthodoxy of our Faith we shall add the Soundness and Integrity of a good Life;—then we shall be happy indeed! Then we shall finish our State of Probation with Joy and Glory! And we shall be admitted to the Fruition of those adorable Mysteries and spiritual Pleasures, which are reserved in Heaven for all those, who have fought the good Fight,—who have finished their Course,—and *have kept the FAITH.*



S E R M O N XIII.

JAMES V—16.

Confess your Faults one to another.

THIS Passage of Scripture hath been the Subject of much Controversy. I do not think it necessary to lay before you all that hath been said upon the Occasion: But, I presume, it may not be amiss to suggest in a few Words the real Meaning of the Apostle in this Place, first by shewing what probably he did *not* intend by this Exhortation, and secondly, what he *did*: *Confess your Faults one to another.* From the Consideration of both which, we may then proceed with a clearer Light, and the greater Certainty to illustrate the general Doctrine of Confession, together with the Advantages, or Mischiefs, that may attend the Practice of it.

FIRST therefore it doth appear from the Contemplation of the Words themselves, that they

H h 2

do

do not countenance any such universal auricular Confession to a Priest, as the Church of *Rome* requires. For the Apostle in this Place doth not recommend that this Confession, whatever it be, should be made in secret,—much less that it should be made only to a Priest: Confess your Faults one to another; or more literally, *to each other mutually*; so that the Words seem to imply rather a *public*, than a *private* Confession: And the Scope and Nature of the Apostle's Argument points to that Sense, as the better Interpretation of the two. Wherefore, secondly, it is very probable, that the Apostle meant only to say, that at their religious Assemblies, it would be expedient for them, at that Juncture, to open the Secrets of their Hearts to each other without Reserve, and to confess their Fears of relapsing, and their Apprehensions of apostatizing, in Case a Persecution should ensue. This, I say, seems to me to be the Apostle's true Sense, and Meaning. And my Reasons for it are the following, viz. 1. The extraordinary Juncture here referred to, was the Invasion of *Judea* by the *Romans*, and the probable Destruction of the *Jewish* State by *Titus* the General;---which in a little Time afterwards actually came to pass. Secondly, Several Passages scattered up and down this Epistle, plainly refer to some great Calamity approaching, or rather actually begun, which could be no other than

than that above mentioned. Thirdly, the *Jews* are particularly reproached at the 6th Verse of this very Chapter, with having condemned, and killed the JUST ONE; whose Blood cried for Vengeance against their whole Nation. And therefore the Apostle adds, *Is he not marshalling his Armies against you?* That is, is not this just one, whose Blood your Rulers have shed, and have wished that it might be required of you, and of your Children;---is not he now bringing in the *Romans*, as the Instruments of Vengeance upon you? [This Interpretation, I own, and the pointing of the Words with a Note of Interrogation, are not agreeable to the commonly received Version: But they are perfectly agreeable to the Context, and to the whole Scope of the Apostle's Argument. Not to mention, that the original *Greek* Word translated *resist*, is plainly a military Term, signifying the Drawing up of Soldiers in Line of Battle.] Wherefore, fourthly. The requiring them to confess their Fears and Apprehensions to one another at such a Crisis, lest their Courage should fail, and they should fall away (which here again seems to be the true Sense of the original Word) was certainly a very prudent Measure, calculated to fortify them against the Evil apprehended. For nothing serves more to strengthen and unite Persons in a good Cause, than mutual Exhortations

tations, and mutual Prayers. And the more publickly this is transacted, the timorous will be more encouraged, the wavering rendered the more steady, and the false Brother, or hypocritical Apostate the more easily detected.

AND thus I have endeavoured to shew, that these Words of the Text, on which the *Romanists* build so much, are so far from countenancing the Doctrine of *secret* and *auricular* Confession to a Priest; that, as far as they can go towards establishing a Rule of Life and Practice, they seem to imply the very contrary. But indeed as they refer to a particular Occasion, and to very peculiar Circumstances; they therefore ought not to be formed into any general Rule, where such Occasions, and such Circumstances do not exist.

HOWEVER, the Practice of secret Confession may yet be expedient in certain Cases, tho' not enjoined by this particular Text. It may be expedient as a Matter of Christian Prudence, or for the Consolation of troubled, of perplexed, or scrupulous Consciences. And therefore, after we shall have exposed the Abuses of this Institution, as practised in the Church of *Rome*, it will not be unseasonable to set forth the proper Uses of it, and to recommend them to the Members of the Church of *England*.

Now

Now the chief Abuses of Confession within the Pale of the Church of *Rome*, seem to spring from ONE GENERAL SOURCE, viz. The injoining of Confession, as a *constant* Obligation incumbent upon ALL; which at the most can only be an *occasional Duty*, proper for a *few*, and in very particular Cases. For all Persons in the *Romish* Communion are required, under the severest ecclesiastical Censures, to confess once a Year at least, viz. Some Time in *Lent*, before the *Easter* Communion, and as much oftener as may be. So that this Institution is regarded in some Sense, as a necessary Cause to the Saving of the Soul: And none can deserve the Name of good Catholics, who would refuse to take a Priest for their Guide in their Way to Heaven.

HENCE therefore the People very naturally infer, that since Confession is a Duty so indispensably required, they have a Right to turn it, if they can, to their own Advantage: And therefore too many there are, who take Care to chuse such Priests to confess to, as they think will deal the most favourably with them, and not be over-strict, or rigorous.

HENCE also such Persons take for granted, that when this Task is performed, the Conscience is discharged from its former Load of Guilt: And that therefore they may begin the same, or a like Course again, provided the same Ceremony

Ceremony of going round and round in the same Circle of sinning and confessing, be repeated.

MOREOVER, hence they are led to enquire of their Confessor, how near they may come to the Borders of Vice in this or that particular Affair, without actually crossing the Line: And what Distinctions may be made between venial and mortal Sins in Thought, Word, or Deed, respecting God, their Neighbour, or themselves.

LASTLY, hence also they are led into a thoughtless Security, by resting upon the Authority of the Priest; and by considering him as a Kind of Proxy for them. Nay, so easy are they in this Respect, and to such a Degree of Insensibility do they lull their Consciences, that they frequently declare, that if their Confessor should *mislead* them, he only must bear the Blame, and they are guiltless.

Now what a fruitful Source is this for the Corruption of the human Heart! What an inexhaustible Fund for prevaricating with God! for chicaning with Conscience, and deceiving their own Souls!

I do not say indeed, that the Church of *Rome* doth actually allow of these Proceedings; much less that she inculcates such Doctrines or Opinions. No, I would not be so unjust or so uncandid. But I do say, that by insisting on the Use of auricular Confession so *very peremptorily*,
she

the opens the Door for all these Disorders to creep in ; and that the one is a necessary Consequence of the other.

BUT the Evils end not here : For the Priests themselves, to whom these Confessions are to be made, are by these Means exposed to very great and grievous Temptations :---Some of which may be better guessed at, than explained. But others I *will* explain, as being not so obvious to the Apprehensions of common Protestants.

I. THEREFORE, these Priests are hereby tempted to shew an improper Complaisance, and to relax the Rules of Morality in Favour of the *Great*. The Hopes of obtaining the Smiles and Approbation of Great Personages are but too prevalent all over the World ; and more especially, in Cases of this Nature, where the Deception may be so easily concealed ?—Nay indeed, where the Priests themselves may be biassed, without their perceiving it (for such is the Deceitfulness of Man's Heart) what can be expected, but that many Concessions will be made, and many Indulgencies shewn, to those of an elevated Station, and a commanding Interest, which would not have been granted to Persons of a middling, or an inferior Condition ? In short, were it a sure Point, that the strait and narrow Path which leadeth unto Life, must pass through the Avenues of auricular Confession, the certain Consequence would be, that

the Rich and the Great would find an easier Way of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, than most others.

BUT, 2dly, Vanity, and a Thirst after Applause, is another powerful Incentive to transgress.—The Clergy of the Church of *Rome* are of like Passions with other Men. And need I say, what Effects Popularity, and the being admired has upon all Mankind?—Now the Priest, who can gain the greatest Numbers to solicit to be confessed by *him*, preferably than by others, is certainly so far honoured and exalted above his Brethren. And therefore it is not to be wondered at, that he should use all Means, laudable or otherwise, to gain this End. The greater Wonder would be, considering the Frailties and Corruptions of human Nature, if he did not.

MOREOVER, Thirdly, The Spirit of Party is another Incentive which must be mentioned, because it operates perhaps stronger than either of the former. For it should be observed, that in the Church of *Rome* the different Orders of Monks and Friars are continually struggling with each other, which shall be uppermost; and their mutual Jealousy and rankling Inveteracy on this Account are almost as violent, as against the Protestants, and those whom they denominate Heretics. Now the Jesuits had clearly gained an Ascendancy (after a long Struggle)

in

in this Respect: So that they had at last almost engrossed the whole Business of Confession to themselves. Indeed it ought to be observed, that they were the only religious Order, who had gone through a Kind of *regular Plan of Education for that Purpose*. For they studied all possible Cases, which might arise; and they filled Books without Number with Points of Casuistry, and subtile Distinctions, to be ready on all Occasions, and to suit all Sorts of Complexions. The other Orders soon took the Alarm, and inveighed bitterly against them. Passages were collected out of their Books of Casuistry, by which it was shewn, that in order to gain Profelytes, and to raise up Partizans and Admirers, they had taught very pernicious Doctrines, and most corrupt Morals. Nor were these severe Charges wholly without Foundation, though some were much exaggerated. But above all, after this civil War had thus gone on for some Time, with various Success, a most formidable Enemy arose against the Jesuits in the Person of the celebrated Pashal, whose incomparable provincial Letters have been the Entertainment and the Admiration of all Christendom for above a Century past:---And still continue to please. The Storm raised against the whole Order by this single Man's Writings was such, that they could neither allay, nor divert it. And the Pope himself was in a Manner compelled by the general Indig-

nation of the People, by the Envy of the other religious Orders, and by the Hatred of the parochial Clergy, whose Province the Jesuits had so much invaded, to fulminate his Bulls against his beloved Society. Consequently great Numbers of Propositions were extracted out of their Books of Casuistry, and solemnly condemned: And a Kind of a Reform was made in the Science of Confession; which, I will charitably believe, has, for the most Part, remained until this Day. I say, I will *charitably believe*; for bad as the Jesuits are, they are not so bad as they have been represented: Nor were they guilty of *every* Thing which was laid to their Charge.

BUT indeed, in order to go to the Root of the Evil, the Affair ought to have been traced higher up: And the Science of Confession itself ought to have been condemned, as well as the Confessors. For after all, let whatever Order of Ecclesiastics take to this Employment, now the Jesuits are expelled, much the same Mischiefs will ensue. And the Reason is, because the Science itself is a Science of Chicane: And if I might be allowed the Use of so low and coarse a Phrase, I would say, it is a Kind of *Petty-fogging* with Almighty God. In Fact, to be for ever coining new Distinctions, and to be always inventing Salvoes, and Quirks, and Reserves in the Performance of our Duty, is a very disingenuous Conduct, utterly unworthy even

even of a Man of Honour, much less of a good Man, and a Christian. Nay, the very Enquiry, how near we may approach to any Crime, without actually being criminal, is in itself an exceeding sinful Thing: It is very sinful, because it runs counter to the great End of the Gospel, which was to grow in Grace, to abound in the Work of the Lord more and more, and to go on unto Perfection. And therefore, I ask, what is it to you or me to know, where the Boundaries of Virtue end? And where Vice begins? Why should we puzzle our Heads with the Enquiry, where Day-Light ceases, and Night commences; since surely none of us can be at a Loss to distinguish the Noon-day Sun from the Midnight Darkness? We Christians, my Brethren, are commanded to walk honestly as in the DAY: We are to have NO FELLOWSHIP with the unfruitful Works of *Darkness*: Nor ought we to think of drawing near to any Boundary, but that great Boundary of human Life, the Death of the Righteous, through which is the Pass from Earth to Heaven.

BUT this brings me to consider, 2dly, the proper Uses of Confession; and how far it may be applied as an advantageous Instrument for the better Discharge of our Duty.

HERE therefore I must premise, that there can be no Need of Confession in any Case, where there is no Doubt about the *Guilt*. Consequently, if Confession should be deemed expedient

dient in such a Case, it must be for some other Reason; and not barely to tell the Minister, that the Party has offended. Now some of these Reasons may be the following, viz. 1. When the Party confessing is in some Doubt, whether he has truly and sufficiently repented of the Crime. And this may become still the more expedient, if there should be any Restitution necessary to be made. For in such a Case, the Minister may not only assist the Penitent with his best Council and Advice, but also be a Means of conveying this Restitution to the injured Person, without discovering the Offender. And I will add, that provided no third Individual should suffer in Fortune and Character, by this Concealment, there can be no warrantable Motive for making a Discovery: And therefore the Clergyman ought not to reveal the Secret, but lock it up in his Breast for ever.

2dly. CONFESSION may be expedient, when the confessing Party is not only penitent for what is past, but also desirous of avoiding every Approach towards the like Crime for the Time to come. This therefore is another Instance; because here also the Advice of a discreet and prudent Minister may be of singular Service. He may suggest such Motives, as with the Blessing of God shall prevail over the Temptation:—He may put his Penitent into such a Course of Devotion, or supply him with such Tracts of practical

tical Religion, as shall find Employment for the Passions in another Way, and give the Affections a new Direction:—He may perhaps be able to point out, how the former Occupation, or Course of Life may be changed for some other less dangerous, and less exposed;—how the ensnaring Company, or Conversation, Books, or Topics may be avoided;—and, in short, how the Sin, which used heretofore so easily to beset this returning Sinner, may for the future be either removed from him, or he from the Sin.

Now in all these Cases, secret Confession may certainly be useful, and therefore is proper to be recommended. But you will please to observe, that I do not insist upon it, as a Matter of absolute Necessity even in such Cases. Far from it:—It is *not* necessary, but it may be *expedient*: And therefore every Person must judge for himself, according to the Rules of Christian Prudence, and his own particular Frame and State of Mind.

HOWEVER, there is yet one Case, which must not be passed over unnoticed, tho' of a Species distinct from all the rest. It is the Case of an excessively timorous, and an over-scrupulous Conscience;—to which a religious Melancholly is a general Concomitant. Now, the Persons, who labour under this Calamity, want, for the most Part, the Prescriptions of the Physician of the Body,

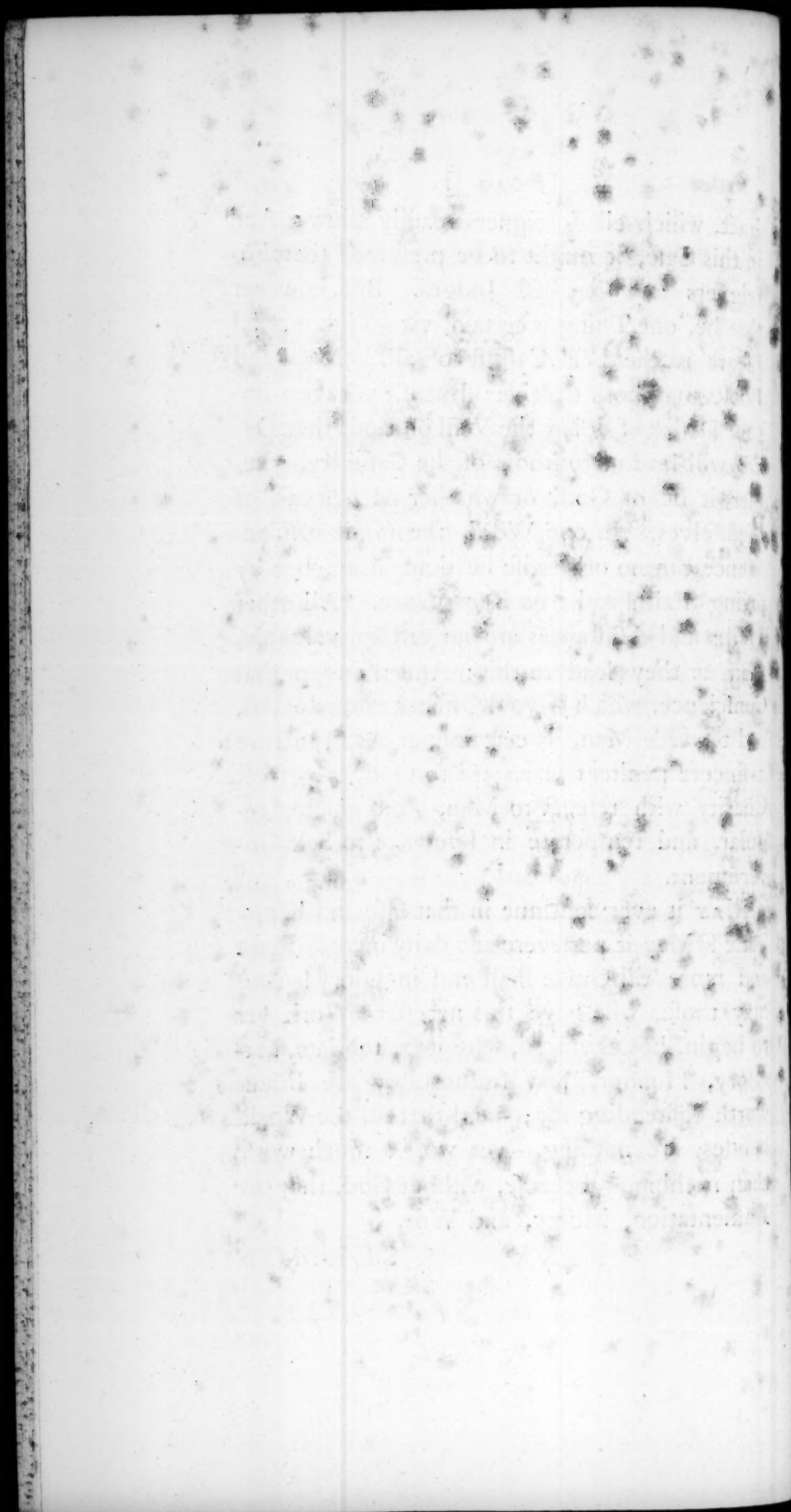
Body full as much as the Advice of the Physician of the Soul. But as the Assistance of both may be requisite in their respective Departments, a pious and judicious Minister will deal very tenderly in such an Affair. He will not bruise this broken Reed, he will not heap up Sorrows on the Sorrowful:—Nor, on the other Extreme, will he discover any Thing in his Conduct bordering upon Sport or Derision:—Much less will he give Occasion to suppose, that he has not the Good of Souls greatly at Heart. Nay, he will not only speak Peace to this afflicted Soul, but speak it in such a Way as may tend to convince his Judgment, that there really is Peace with God;—and that therefore he, and his Conscience ought to be at Peace with each other.

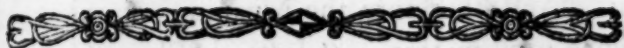
BUT I will pursue this Subject no farther. It is a very particular Case; and it well deserves a particular Consideration in a separate Discourse.

WHEREFORE, my Brethren, having proceeded thus far, I have now only one Thing more to say, before I conclude, viz. That such Members of the Church of *England*, as are blessed with sound Faculties and strong Understandings, have less Need than most others of casuistical Assistances. They have less;—because the Discourses, which they hear, or might hear from the Pulpit, generally contain such clear and explicit Rules, as they themselves may easily apply to particular Cases, if they please. This is a Fact,

Fact, which all Foreigners readily allow: And in this Case, it ought to be presumed that Foreigners are the best Judges. But however that be, one Thing is certain, viz. That a good Heart is the best Casuist of all. Men and Books may both deceive: But if we have a sincere Desire of doing the Will of God, that Desire will lead us to know of the Casuistry, whether it be of God, or whether Men speak of themselves. In one Word, the Guilt of Conscience can no otherwise be done away, but by saving Faith and true Repentance. All other Helps and Assistances are no farther valuable, than as they lead to this: And therefore that Conscience, which is void Offence towards God, and towards Man, is certainly at that Juncture a sincere penitent in regard to God, in perfect Charity with respect to Man,---and chaste, regular, and temperate in reference to Self-Government.

MAY it ever continue in that safe and happy State! May it persevere and daily increase more and more 'till Grace shall end in Glory! And may those, who have this necessary Work yet to begin, be convinced, 'e're it be too late, that Glory, Honour, and Immortality are Prizes worth contending for;---and that all the World besides; are nothing,---yea worse, much worse than nothing;---because, without God, they are Lamentation, Misery, and Woe.





S E R M O N XIV.

JOHN xxi—22.

What is that to thee? Follow thou me.

WE find by the Context, that these Words were a Reply, which our Lord made to a certain Question propounded by *St. Peter*. For after Christ had risen from the Dead, and had confirmed the Faith of his Disciples by a Series of miraculous Proofs; the former Prejudices of the Apostles, which they held in common with other Jews, concerning a temporal Reign of their Messiah, began to revive again; and they seemed to have entertained more wild Schemes of worldly Grandeur and secular Ambition.

BUT whatever were their vain Hopes and visionary Expectations, our Lord put an effectual Stop to them all by the Rebuke contained in the Text, *What is that to thee? Follow thou me.* Now to follow Christ in the Language of the

Gospel, is to be the Disciple of his Doctrine, and to copy after the Pattern which he has set us. And therefore the Meaning of the Sentence must be this;—"Instead of busying your self in those Inquiries, which are beyond your Sphere, and do not belong to you; obey my Precepts, and imitate my Example; and then you are sure of doing right: For your whole Duty consists in this; and in nothing else."

A very comprehensive, and a most weighty Injunction this! May therefore the Saviour of Mankind, who gave us this Advice and Caution, both enable us to understand them in their full Extent, and also inspire us with Grace and Resolution to carry them into Practice during the whole Course of our Lives. Amen!

Now the Curiosity of Mankind in Matters of Religion, which ought to be checked, because productive of no Good, and liable to many Evils, is that which is observed to exert itself in the three following Disquisitions.

1st. In attempting to fathom the deep Mysteries of Religion by the short Line of human Reason:

2dly. In enquiring too nicely into the precise Boundaries between Virtue and Vice: And

3dly. In undertaking to judge of the whole Administration of Providence by those glimmering Lights, and imperfect Notices, with which we are furnished in our present State.

AND

AND as each of these deserves a just Rebuke, I shall proceed to animadvert on them in their Order.

1st. THEREFORE, the attempting to fathom the deep Mysteries of Religion by the short Line of human Reason, ought to be checked and re-proved, as an unwarrantable and dangerous Curiosity. For the Understanding of the most judicious, or the most enlightened among us, are by no Means equal to such an Undertaking. Nay indeed the highest Angels or Arch-Angels, being still but Creatures, cannot possibly comprehend the whole Nature, and boundless Perfections of an infinite Creator. Thus for Example; from the Principles of *natural Reason* it may be learnt, that God is a self-existent Being: Also from the Suggestions of *natural Religion*, it may be, nay, it has been, clearly inferred by the Heathen themselves, (as *St. Paul* takes Notice) that we, and all his Creatures, live, and move, and exist in him, or by Virtue of Powers derived from him. Thus far therefore we are safe:---But if we should still go on, and push our Enquiries, “What is a self-existent Being? “Is he every where present, or not?---If not, “how can he operate at a Distance, where he “himself is absent? Or if present, how can “he prevent himself from being circumscribed “by Space, or limited by Place? Yet if his “Presence should be circumscribed and limited like

“like that of all other Beings; then how can
 “he exist beyond that Space and Place, which
 “enclose or bound in his Existence?”---These,
 I say, and many such Questions, which might
 be drawn even from the Principles of *natural*
Religion,—are nevertheless such *incomprehensible*
Mysteries, that the profoundest Philosopher, and
 the most ignorant among the Vulgar, are equally
 in the Dark concerning them. Rather there-
 fore than to attempt to fathom such awful
 Depths with the short Line of human Reason, let
 every busy bold Enquirer apply to himself the
 salutary Caution contained in the Text, *What is*
that to thee? And instead of entering into intri-
 cate and endless Disputations about the Manner
 of the Existence of the first of all Causes;—let
 him follow his Lord and Master Jesus Christ,
 who while residing here on Earth, set a Pattern
 to all Mankind for their Imitation, by yielding
 a chearful Obedience, and an entire Religna-
 tion to the Divine Will: *Follow thou me.*

AND if from the *Mysteries of natural Religion*,
 we should turn our Eyes to those of *revealed*, we
 shall find the same Difficulties to encounter with,
 and an equal Necessity of observing the Injunc-
 tions in the Text. For by comparing Scripture
 with Scripture, we may learn with sufficient
 Evidence, that there are three Persons in the God-
 head, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;—and that
 each of these three hath had, and still hath, a prin-
 cipal

cipal Share in the Redemption and Salvation of
 Mankind. But nevertheless, how these three
 Persons unite and co-alesce, as it were, in one
 Nature and Essence, and yet remain separate and
 distinct in their *personal* Capacities;—is an Af-
 fair, which ever has, and perhaps ever will, ex-
 ceed the Limits of human Comprehension.
 And indeed, what have we to do to intermeddle
 with Subjects so very sublime, and so vastly be-
 yond all our Faculties and Powers? *What is that*
to thee?—On the contrary, as each of these Di-
 vine Persons hath manifested, and is still mani-
 festing, the most amazing Love and the greatest
 Condescension to the Souls of Men;—may we
 not represent (with Deference and Respect be-
 it suggested) each of them as speaking to each
 of us, *Follow thou me?*—That is, do thou imi-
 tate my Example of doing Good, and of shew-
 ing Kindness and Condescension to thy Fellow-
 Creatures, as far as thy feeble Powers and Abi-
 lities will extend?

AGAIN, The Doctrine of the *Incarnation* of
 the *eternal* Son of God, who was the Brightness
 of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of
 his Person before the World began, is a Doc-
 trine of a like Completion. For it describes
 an Union of two Natures in one Person, of
 which we cannot possibly have any just and ade-
 quate Idea: It marks out such a Conjunction of
 Omnipotence and Omnipresence with Impotence
 and

and Imperfection, as a finite Capacity is not able to conceive. But after all, *what is that to thee?* And canst not thou learn a Lesson from this Alliance of the Divinity with Humanity, which is of a much better Tendency than any Disquisitions about the Mode or Manner of such a Conjunction?---Surely thou canst:—For from hence thou mayest infer both the *Value* of thine own immortal Soul, seeing that such Efforts were made by Omnipotence itself to save it;—and also the great *Love* of God in thus condescending to plan and execute such a Method for its Recovery and Salvation. Here then, do thou follow the Example, which is here before thee. Here observe the Worth and Dignity of the Souls of Men:---And therefore here learn to practice the Humility of stooping to the lowest Offices in doing Good to others; seeing that the Son of God himself, who thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, yet condescended so low as to take upon him the Form of a Servant, and to suffer all Kinds of Indignities, and even Death itself, in order to do Good to thee. Consequently in every Case, where my Example is proposed for thy Imitation, *follow thou me.*

ONCE more: The *Redemption* of Mankind, by the Sacrifice and Death of Christ, is a Doctrine, which hath Difficulties and Perplexities not a few. Could, for Example, no other Method but this be taken by the Wisdom of Providence

vidence for compassing such an End? *What is that to thee?* Could not God have been pacified with any Sacrifice of less Value and Dignity than that of his own eternal Son? *What is that to thee?* Doth the Benefit of this Sacrifice, now it is offered up, extend to the Inhabitants of other Worlds, as well as to those of our own? *What is that to thee?* And can we guess, what would have been the Consequence, had mere Repentance been only insisted on, without any proper Atonement or Propitiation for Sin? No, we cannot guess: But *what is that to thee?*—On the contrary, if we wish to know, how to forgive our Enemies, and to return Good for Evil; here is the very Lesson; and this is the Example set us by Christ himself! *Follow thou me.* Or if we want to have a Pattern and Exemplification of Patience in Afflictions, and of a perfect Resignation to the Divine Will:—If we wish to see some striking Examples of Meekness, Humility, and Self-denial in the most trying Scenes of Life;—Here we have the very Thing we wish for: *Follow thou me.*

Thus much as to the sublime and awful Mysteries of our Faith, whether according to the Law of Nature, or of Grace:—In Relation to which it evidently appears, that tho' an indiscreet and dangerous Curiosity is forbidden,—yet nevertheless there is Scope enough still left

employing all our Faculties and Powers in the Concerns of Religion:—And for employing them too in the best and most honourable Way, viz. in displaying the Glory of God, and setting forth his great Mercy, Goodness, and Condescension to Mankind;—also in promoting our own Happiness, and the Good of our Fellow Creatures, by co-operating with this System of Grace and Salvation. How therefore can we wish for, or why should we desire, a better Employment? And what have we to do, but to make it the Business and Study of our Lives to apply every Maxim, whether of Caution or of Exhortation, to their respective proper Ends?

BUT, 2dly, there is another Species of dangerous Curiosity, which perhaps deserves as severe a Reproof, as any at all:—I mean, that prurient Desire of knowing, *where* lies the exact Boundary between Virtue and Vice, and of ascertaining, *when* the one ends, and the other begins. For let me ask such a meddling Philosopher, * what good End do you propose to yourself in making these Inquiries? And do you really think, that you are forming them with a View of retreating still farther from the Confines

* See the foregoing Sermon on the Casuistry of the Church of *Rome*, and more particularly of the late Jesuits respecting auricular Confession, and the Doctrine of Absolution.

of Vice, as soon as you shall know, where to draw the Line? Or can you even suggest to your Imagination, that when you become more familiarized to the Idea of what is *wrong*, you will have the stronger Inclination to do what is *right*? Alas! Alas! whosoever can suppose these Things, seems to be a very great Stranger to the actual Workings of human Nature: And it is much to be feared, that such a *weak Head* will easily be duped by the Wiles and Deceits of his *wicked Heart*.

PARTICULARLY it is observeable, that these Things frequently come to pass, when Men begin to descant on the Limits and Boundaries of those Virtues, which were intended to restrain and moderate their animal Appetites and natural Inclinations. Temperance, for Instance, is the Virtue, by which we are to regulate our instinctive Desires after Food, and to prevent their degenerating into Gluttony and Excess. But who will undertake to describe in all Respects, and at every Repast, the exact Boundaries between the temperate Use, and the gluttonous Abuse of the good Creatures of God? Who will set up the distinctive Mark, where the one ends, and the other begins? And in sober Truth, who needs, or who ought to do it? *For what is that to thee?*—Nay, provided thou art clearly on the virtuous Side of the Line, what Good is it to know, how many

Degrees thou mightest have approached nearer to the Habitations of Vice, without actually entering into these Tents of Ungodliness? In Fact, whosoever will allow his Appetites and Passions to debate and argue with him on such Topics, is already farther gone, and is much nearer to Danger than he is aware of. Avoid therefore, avoid, I beseech you, all such treacherous Knowledge, and deceitful Casuistry: and strive to excell in Wisdom of another Nature. Thy great Aim and End it should always be, to follow thy Master Christ, and to be an Example, and a Pattern to others, as he was to thee. And when this is accomplished, then indeed let the Line of Division between Virtue and Vice be wherever it may,—it will be visible to all, that thou art far distant from the forbidden Coast: Thou art safe and happy in the blessed Regions of Duty and good Morals.

THE very same Observations might likewise be made on the Virtues of Sobriety and Chastity; Virtues which are best practised by keeping at a religious Distance from the contrary Vices; and which will not bear to be treated with much Familiarity and Freedom even in Theory and Speculation. In short, both these Virtues, and more especially Chastity, are of a Nature so refined and delicate, that if you should begin to enter into curious Disquisitions about their Texture

tute and Composition, their Marks and Boundaries, you go near to destroy the Things themselves.

WHEREFORE I come now thirdly and lastly to pass a Censure on the remaining Species of dangerous Curiosity, which hath before been mentioned, viz. The Undertaking to judge of the whole Administration of the Divine Government by such imperfect Notices, and scanty Measures, as are imparted to us in this Life.

Now this Species chiefly manifests itself in the two following Respects; first, in wishing to be informed, when the Day of Judgment shall appear; and what is the Reason of the Delay of its Coming: And, secondly, in attempting to know, why the wicked are so often permitted to flourish in the present Life; and the righteous so frequently oppressed?

WITH respect to the first of these, suffice it to remark, that the Day of our Deaths will virtually be the Day of Judgment to all the Sons of *Adam*. For as the Tree falls, so will it lie, without any moral Change or Alteration. Therefore, whether the last Trump shall sound at the End of one Year,—or of an Hundred,—or of a Thousand after our Decease, is not so material for us to know, as it is, to have a well-founded Christian Assurance, that we have made our Peace with God *before* we die. For this alone is our grand Concern: And in this only our
saving

saving Knowledge and true Wisdom properly consists. The Scriptures have told us enough, in telling us, that one Time or other, we shall certainly all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, in order to receive a Recompense *for the Things done in the Body, whether good or bad.* But the Scriptures have not informed us, whether this awful Event will happen during the Lives of the present Generation,—or of the next,---or of the next to that. And where the Scriptures have been silent, we have no other Means of Information. Therefore, since it is the Wisdom of Providence, that you should not be instructed in any Thing, but the Certainty of the Fact;---nay, since it is expressly declared, that the Day of Judgment will come upon you suddenly and unexpectedly, even as a Thief in the Night;---what have you to do, but to wait for its Coming with all Watchfulness and Perseverance? For as to the precise Time or Hour, when the Son of Man shall appear in the Clouds of Heaven;---this is plainly no Concern of yours; and therefore rest satisfied in your Ignorance. In short, *What is that to thee?* But nevertheless depend upon it, that whether Christ delays or accelerates his Coming, there are good, there are the best Reasons for such a Conduct; and that is enough for us to know.

SETTING therefore aside all other Speculations as both useless and dangerous, let it be our constant

stant Care and Study to prepare to meet our Lord, whenever he shall come. Let this be the great and daily Object of our Prayers and Endeavours. For this is, and this we know must be, a right Conduct: This will lead us into no Errors; this will not deceive our Hopes, or frustrate our Expectations;—and to sum up all, this will bring us Peace at the last.

As to the second Enquiry, why are the Wicked permitted to flourish? And why are the Righteous so often oppressed? Suffice it briefly to observe, that in many Cases we are very incompetent Judges to determine concerning the relative Wickedness, or Goodness of Mankind;—we, I say, who know so little of the inward Springs and Motions of the Heart, and of the Strength of Temptation, and other Circumstances. Moreover in respect to such Matters, where we might be supposed to be capable of forming a truer Judgment,---suffice it also to observe, that the Wicked shall not always flourish, nor shall the Righteous be oppressed for ever. Let us therefore rest fully satisfied in this Persuasion, that a Day is approaching, when all the Inequalities of the present Scene of Things, will be completely and finally adjusted; and when it shall appear, that the Delays, and the seeming Imperfections, which at present we cannot account for, will be found to be all the Effects of infinite Goodness and Benevolence, guided and directed by infinite Wisdom.

IN

In the mean Time, let us duly consider, that *we* shall not be able to make any Apology for *our Delays*, or indeed for any Part of our Conduct, if we have wasted our Time or our Talents in fruitless Speculations, or in such Employments and such Courses as are not becoming the Gospel of Christ.



S E R M O N XV.

H E B R E W S i.—I.

God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son.

[Preached both at an Ordination, and a Visitation.]



AS Man is a Creature formed to give an Account of his Conduct and Behaviour, there is no Doubt to be made, but that God either did, or was ready to make known to him at all Times such a Portion of the Divine Will, as might have enabled him to render the Account required. In a State of Innocence the first Thing prescribed by the Law of right Reason is *Obedience*. In a State of Guilt the first Step towards Acceptance is *Repentance*. For the *innocent* Man cannot be called upon to *repent*, but to *obey*; nor can the *Guilty* be admitted into actual Favour, or be said to obey conscientiously for the future, before he *repents* of the past. These two therefore Obedience, and Repentance, must

M m

at

at all Times after the Fall, and under every Modification of the divine Government, have constituted the grand Outlines of Man's Obligation.

ACCORDINGLY we find, that the innocent first Pair were called upon to *obey*; and that the Threatning of Death was denounced against them in Case of Disobedience. After the Fall they were re-admitted into Favour: But we have very plain Intimations, that this Re-admission was preceded by their *Repentance*: Nay, we collect further, that in order to encourage them to repent, and preserve them from Despair, they were comforted with the Prospect of a future Dispensation, wherein the Victory of the Serpent over them, would be amply revenged by the Power of the Seed of the Woman over him. This Seed of the Woman, intimated at first in a dark and mysterious Manner, was afterwards more fully foretold by subsequent Revelations: Sacrifices and Types seemed to have removed the Vail a *little*, and to have advanced a few Steps in the Discovery, by making under Figures and Emblems some mystical Representation of the Cause and Foundation of God's Reconciliation with repenting Sinners. After this Method had made some Impression, then the Faithful of God were favoured with repeated Prophecies and Predictions, which, by enlarging on the Character, and describing the
Offices

Offices of the Messiah, served to clear up several of the former Doubts and Difficulties. And such Information became still more determinate in Proportion as the Time approached for the last and greatest Dispensation of all, when God *resolved* to speak unto us immediately by his Son.

THUS from the Beginning of Time hath the Deity left himself not without Witness in the World. The Law of Obedience was the great Creed of Nature in a State of Innocence; the Law of Repentance is the gracious Call of Revelation in a State of Guilt: And the Hopes of Forgiveness in Consequence of such Repentance, intimated originally by the Promise of a Deliverer in the Seed of the Woman, were afterwards more authentickly confirmed, and absolutely shewn to be founded in the alone Merits and Intercessions of him, who was born of a pure Virgin, and whose coming into the World was in order to save and redeem it.

HERE you see the general Connection of the various Dispensations of Religion from the first in Paradise to the last on the Cross.—But still, this Method of considering the Subject displays only the *Connection*, without discovering the *Extent* or *Limits* of the respective Dispensations. It shews indeed, that from the Beginning of the World to the present Times, Providence has done great Things in order to take Care of the

Interests of Religion, and to put Men into a Capacity of obtaining eternal Happiness. But it doth not shew, whether these Dispensations were all universal, or all particular; Or which were the one, and which the other. And yet, 'till we arrive at that Knowledge, we shall not be so well able to judge of the Propriety and Harmony of the several Parts of this one general System, nor be so truly qualified to give a Reason of the Hope that is in us, as the Nature of the holy Function of the Ministers of the Gospel, and the present Circumstances of the World around them do actually require. Let us therefore recall the Subject, and reconsider the Matter with a View to this Inquiry.

AND first, it is evident from the Nature of the Case, that the first Dispensation was *universal*, reaching to all alike. For as the Will and Law of God were made known to ADAM in Paradise, the Covenant of Obedience, or the Call to obey, was as extensive as there were Subjects capable of obeying.

FOR the same Reason we must assert, that the pardoning Dispensation after the Fall, which by Way of Antithesis to the former, might be justly called the Covenant of *Repentance*, was universal likewise.

NEXT to this we have the Covenant made with NOAH after the Flood; a Covenant, as to the

the general Terms or Conditions of it, little more than a Renewal of the former, but as to Bounds or Extent, quite unlimited and universal.

BUT from this Time forwards, even 'till the coming of Christ, a great Alteration is observable in the Conduct of Providence; inasmuch as God did not proceed any longer by Way of general and universal Calls, but by *particular* Covenants, and *local* Dispensations. For when the Ways of Men after the Flood became corrupt again, and the Earth was filling very fast with Idolatry, Bloodshed, and all Kinds of Iniquity, there seemed to be but the following Alternative to be pursued;—to be pursued, I mean, consistently with the Freedom of Man's Choice, and the Liberty of his Actions; viz. either to bring a certain general Destruction upon the Earth, like to that which had so lately been executed, and then to institute a *new* Covenant with the few Survivors;—or else to select a particular Person, the Head of a Family and Nation, and to erect this People into a Religious Colony, so as to become a speaking Monument of Divine Favour and Protection, whereby other Nations might be induced to see and hear, and to fear and obey the true God. The former of these Methods having been practiced before, was now omitted; and the latter chosen by the divine Councils (doubtless for the
best

best of Reasons) as preferable at that Juncture. The Consequence of which was, that the Call and Covenant became limited to ABRAHAM, and his Descendants; because they were the only People, with whom the Deposit of true Religion was to remain, till the Fulness of Time should come for breaking down this temporary Enclosure, and making once more a *general* Tender of Salvation to all Nations. Had indeed a Method been pursued when ABRAHAM was chosen out of the rest of the World, similar to that which took Place in the Days of NOAH; i. e. had all the rest of the World, except ABRAHAM and his Family, been destroyed, the Consequence would have been, that the Abrahamic Covenant would have been a *general* one; because it would have included all the Race of Men then existing. But from the Train of Reasoning here suggested, it seems to appear, that an universal Call could not in such Circumstances have been so properly made, without either bringing a second universal Destruction on the World of the Ungodly,---or, if the Wicked were to be spared, without using such violent and irresistible Methods for executing this general Call upon, and Covenant with them, as would have been repugnant to the Rules of God's moral Government, and quite subversive of the Nature of Virtue and Vice, and the Idea of Rewards and Punishments. A third Plan

was

was therefore pitched upon, which was neither to destroy the natural World, nor subvert the Constitution of the Moral; but by keeping clear of both Extremes, was to punish the shocking Idolatries and complicated Wickedness of the *Canaanites*, at the same Time that it was to exhibit a new Lesson of Warning and Repentance, and a new Species of Instruction to a guilty World.

HAVING advanced thus far, I would here beg Leave to observe, that what hath been now said, was not intended, and therefore ought not to be considered to be intended, as a complete Defence or Vindication of the Ways of Providence in making its Calls and Dispensations at one Time general, and at other Times particular. No: This would be a Task, which, thoroughly to execute, perhaps would have required greater Abilities, and a larger Insight into the Views and Plans of the divine Councils, than any mere Mortal ought to pretend to. But nevertheless, tho' the whole Length of the Chain may be endless, some few Links of it may fairly be supposed, without Presumption, to come within our own Reach and Observation. And therefore what God hath condescended in this Manner to bring down to the Level of our Capacities, may be a proper Subject to be reasoned upon;—provided this Reasoning proceeds with
Humility,

Humility, and ends with Deference and Submission.

BUT however, be the Arguments here suggested conclusive, or otherwise, and whatever were the Reasons for selecting a particular Family, in the Person of ABRAHAM and his Descendants, to be a peculiar People unto God,---instead of making a general Tender of the true Religion to all the Nations and Languages then in being;---certain it is, that the FACT ITSELF WAS SO. ABRAHAM was the Man first elected and predestinated unto this high Honour; and after him ISAAC and JACOB, (ESAU and his Posterity being rejected) and then the Patriarchs. Moreover, when the People grew and multiplied, so that their Numbers became considerable enough to be formed into a distinct and separate Nation, MOSES not only renewed the former patriarchal Covenant, but superadded many Institutions both of a religious and civil Nature;---Institutions so peculiar and discriminating as to cause the Children of *Israel* to regard themselves, and to be regarded by others, as a People separate and distinct from all others on the Face of the Earth. Thus was there, as to outward Privileges, and for a certain Season, an Election of the *Jews*, and a Non-Election of the *Gentiles*; and thus did the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, the Giving of the

the Laws, the Service of God, and the Promises continue from the Days of MOSES 'till the Death of Christ, to be the Partition Wall between them and other Nations. But when the Fullness of Time was come for the *Gentiles* to be called in, and elected as well as the *Jews*, this Partition Wall was broken down; and the former Adoption, the former Glory, and all the distinguishing Prerogatives of the People of God, became the common Inheritance of the Faithful, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*. God therefore, who at fundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son:---Unto *us*, I say, the Offspring of the *Gentiles*, who, tho' once afar off, and Strangers to the Covenant of the Promise, are now made nigh by the Blood of Christ. For the Commission, which was formerly limited to one Nation only, viz. *Hear, O Israel!* is now so enlarged as to comprehend, according to the Stile and Intention of our Divine Law-Giver, every People and Country under Heaven, viz. *Go, preach the Gospel to every Creature;---make Profelites from among all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even unto the End of the World.*

N n

You

You see, we are now come to the last Dispensation of all, wherein God hath spoken unto us immediately by his Son: You see likewise the interesting Contents of it, viz. *Tidings of Joy to all People*: Nay more, you see as it were in one View the several Gradations of Providence, and the successive Alterations of its Oeconomy from general to particular Calls, and from particular to the last, great, general one again.—But, having thus taken a brief Survey of them all, may we not still enquire into the distinguishing Characteristics of general and particular Dispensations?—And while we take the Word of God for our Guide, and make a proper Use of that Reason which he hath vouchsafed to give us, may we not employ ourselves very profitably in contemplating the several Instances of his Mercy and Goodness, and revering the Wonders he hath done for the Children of Men? Doubtless we may: And the further we proceed in such Inquiries under a proper Disposition of Mind, the more we shall certainly discover of the Wisdom and Beneficence of the Divine Being in his Dealings with us; the better likewise shall we be able to put to Silence the Ignorance and Presumption of foolish Men, in their half-considered Objections to the Scripture Account of these Things.

Now in regard to a particular Call, or a particular Covenant, whatever the distinguishing Cha-

Characteristics of it may be found to be, one Thing is certain, viz. That such Characteristics cannot consist in any Change or Alteration of the fundamental Doctrines of *Obedience*, and *Repentance*; inasmuch as these are the very Essence of true Religion; nor is it possible, that any System whatever can come from God without *them*. In one Word, even an undefiled Saint, who had never transgressed, ought still to *obey* his Creator, his Law-Giver, and Judge; but a polluted Sinner should both *repent* and *obey*. But nevertheless, tho' every System and every Modification of true Religion must be *uniform* in regard to these two grand Points, Obedience and Repentance, it may admit of greater Alterations in other Respects. And the more particular and circumscribed any Call or Covenant is supposed to be, the more it may appoint such local Observances, as would best suit the People called or covenanted with, and serve to discriminate them from others; it may likewise prescribe a greater Distinction in the Externals both of Church and State, than otherwise there would have been Need to do; and in short, it may require any Number of Rites and Ceremonies (provided it doth not require too many for the Nature of the Case) as are in themselves neither good, nor bad; and whose only Worth or Virtue consists in making up a Partition Wall between the selected People, and the rest of Mankind.

APPLY now all that has been here said to the particular Case of the limited Jewish Dispensation; and observe what it will amount to. The first and essential Things are the Doctrines of Obedience and Repentance; and in regard to them, it cannot be so much as pretended, that the peculiar Covenant made with the House of *Israel* did tend to abrogate, or supersede them. So far therefore all is right. Nay more, it ought to be especially taken Notice of, that the greatest Pains were used by *Moses* to inculcate the Duties of Hospitality and Benevolence towards all, particularly towards those who were not of their own Country, or Religion: Nor is there the least Encouragement given to the elected to exercise any Degree of Injustice, Cruelty, or Animosity against the non-elected. On the contrary if there are any Precepts relating to Justice, Charity, and Humanity which seem to be enforced with an Emphasis more than common, they are such as require the Children of *Israel* to be kind, humane, and tender-hearted towards such Foreigners as might come among them. Of the Truth of which Assertion the following Passages may serve as Illustrations; *Thou shalt neither vex a Stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were Strangers in the Land of Egypt.—God doth execute the Judgment of the Fatherless and Widow, and loveth the Stranger in giving him Food and Raiment; love ye therefore*
the

the Stranger. — And when thou gatherest the Grapes of thy Vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterwards; it shall be for the Stranger, for the Fatherless, and for the Widow; and thou shalt remember, that thou wast a Bondman in the Land of Egypt: Therefore I command thee to do this thing." Words

cannot be found, that could express this Commandment stronger; nor could any Topic be urged of a more persuasive Nature, than what you find here urged in the Books of *Moses*. —

If the subsequent History of this People furnish us with any Instances, wherein these good Precepts were violated, that Fault is not chargeable upon the Law, but upon those who broke it: For as to the Constitution itself, it was so far from being unfriendly or inhospitable to Strangers (an Objection often made, but always founded in Ignorance, and supported by Prejudice) that no other Constitution ever existed, 'till the Christian, in which greater Care was taken to secure to Strangers, not only the peaceable Enjoyment of their Industry and Labour, but also all the kind Offices of Fellow-Feeling, and tender Compassion.

NOR let any one object, that the Destruction of the *Canaanites* was a Violation of this Rule: — It was in fact no Violation of it, when properly understood, because the Commission relating to that affair was particular and special, and had nothing to do with the general Course of Things :

Things: So that in Reason nothing more can be collected from it, than that the enormous Crimes of those People were ripe for Vengeance, and that the Almighty Disposer of all Things, made Use of such Instruments to execute his Decrees upon them, as he saw best and properest: Which, as I said before, being a special Case, ought therefore to be excepted out of our general Reasonings on the present Subject. — Had it so pleased the divine Providence, instead of commissioning the Waters of the Flood to destroy all Flesh in the Days of *Noah*, *Noah* himself and his Family might have been commissioned to be the Instruments of that Punishment. And if that had been the Case, what created Being could have had a right to object to the Propriety thereof? Or who could say, either that such a Commission ought not to have been granted by the one Party, or executed by the other? In short, special Commissions, and extraordinary Examples of executing Vengeance and striking Terror in the moral World are no more to be reasoned upon, or judged of according to stated Rules, than a Deluge, a Volcano, or any such astonishing Prodigy is to be reckoned among the settled, ordinary Course of Things in the natural World.

THEREFORE to return:—The Points of Obedience and Repentance admitting of no Variation, whether the Calls or Covenants be general
or

or partial; in what then, may we ask, did the Peculiarity of the Mosaic Covenant consist? And the Answer is, that it consisted in those very Things, and those only, in which alone a true System of *local* Religion could consist, viz. In local Assemblies, in Differences of Dress, Manners, and Customs, Distinctions of Meats, peculiar Ceremonials of religious Worship, and Forms of Civil Government. So that you see here, how the Reasonings upon the Case, and the Matters of Fact, do perfectly coincide.

ON the other Hand, the very Motives, which required these Things to be made the distinguishing Characteristics of a limited or particular Covenant, furnish us with a Demonstration, that they are absolutely unfit to be continued as any Parts of an universal one. For the only Characteristic of such a Covenant must consist in this, viz. That the Terms and Conditions of it will suit all Nations, People, and Languages, and are alike practicable in every Country under Heaven. Therefore when the Time came for the Calling in of the *Gentiles*, the Law of carnal Ordinances *could* no longer have remained in Force; because that Law was only intended to keep up the very Distinction, which was now to be taken away, and abolished for ever.

FROM this general and comprehensive View of the Subject, many important Reflections present themselves to our serious Regard; some of which

which it will not be amiss briefly to touch upon, as far as the Limits of the present Discourse will permit.

As first, — Hence we learn the exact and characteristical Difference between general, and particular Covenants; the Nature of the one being to accommodate itself to all People and Languages alike, and that of the other to suit only a particular Nation, and to keep them separate from the rest of Mankind. This you will say, is a plain State of the Case : — So very plain that none can mistake it. But alas, plain as the Rule is, when the Church of Christ was sorely rent (as it frequently hath been) with fierce Controversies, and still fiercer Persecutions about local Rites and Ceremonies, about Distinctions of Dresses, and such like outward Forms, the Reason and the Rule were wholly over-looked: And those short-sighted Christians, who thought they could never keep at too great a Distance from the out-cast *Jews*, approached in fact much nearer to them, than they weakly imagined, or the Nature of the universal Christian Covenant permitted them to do. But let us, my Brethren, who now enjoy greater Light, grow *better*, as well as *wiser* by their Miscarriages; always endeavouring not to be deficient in Knowledge to regulate our Zeal, or in Zeal to animate our Knowledge. In short, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only Ceremonies essential

essential to the Christian Covenant; and they are practicable every where : Nay more, 'tis only the *Substance* of these that is essential; for as to the Mode or Form of administering them, that might vary according to the Customs and Manners of different Nations; provided no Variation is made in the Injunctions of our Lord; provided also, that the Remainder of the Ceremonials is modelled according to Decency and Order.

HENCE therefore we may be furnished with a full and satisfactory Answer to the Objections of modern Unbelievers against the seeming Frivolousness and Insignificancy of the Jewish Ceremonials. — Frivolous and insignificant perhaps some of them would have been, had they been engrafted into a general Covenant such as the Christian. But when we consider them as constituent Parts of the *Hebrew* Dispensation, we have one irrefragable Argument in their behalf; viz. That tho' we should allow them to be neither designed as so many Antidotes to certain bad Customs prevailing among the *Egyptians*, or other neighbouring Nations; — nor Types of the Messiah's Sufferings or Exaltation (tho' 'tis certain that many of the Ceremonies prescribed by Moses, had a Reference to one, or other of these Points) yet still, if they were fit Materials for building up the Partition Wall between the *Jews* and other People, they

O o

were

were absolutely the very Things, of which a particular and local Covenant ought to consist : — And consequently in that Sense neither frivolous, nor insignificant.

HENCE also we may learn to set a right Value on every Part of the *Jewish* Constitution, and to treat it with more Respect than some zealot Christians have indiscreetly done.---The *Jewish* Constitution, while in Force, was the Constitution of God : And it can answer no good Purpose to represent his own Word and Work as unworthy of him. The Truth is, that the Difference between that and the Christian is of the same Nature as a Difference between a particular Means, and a general End. The End is certainly the most excellent ; but this is no Reason, why the Means should be spoken of in such low and degrading Terms, as in their Effects and Consequences would disparage the End itself. For after all, we must allow, that this Constitution was extremely proper for what it was intended, and complete and perfect in *its Kind*. Therefore, as the comparative Imperfection of it was owing to deep Design and wise Contrivance, and not to any other Cause, it can do no Sort of Honour to the common Author of both, to exalt the Christian at the Expence of the *Jewish*.

HENCE also we may see Cause, to call upon those Unbelievers, who object with Insult and
Acrimony

Acrimony to the Partiality of the *Jewish Cove-*
nant, and the Invasion and Extirpation of the
Canaanites;---to tell us what ought to have been
 done in such Circumstances, and to point out
 such Methods, as would, in their Opinion, have
 done better, and been free from all Objections.
 Would it, for Example, have been right, that
 the World should have proceeded on from Ini-
 quity to Iniquity without any Check or Con-
 troul at all? And would this supine and passive
 Conduct have been agreeable to the Character
 of a vigilant, all-powerful, and righteous Go-
 vernor of the Universe? Or would it have
 been better to have brought on another general
 Destruction like to that of the Deluge, in order
 to have swept away all the Workers of Iniquity,
 and then to have begun the Business of Religion
 anew with the Re-peopling of the World?—
 Or lastly, would it have been best to have
 turned all these wicked People into Machines
 by over-ruling their Wills, and forcing them to
 be good and virtuous in Spite of their own
 Choice and Inclination?—In Fact, one or other
 of these Methods seems necessary to be pitched
 upon by those who object to the Scripture Ac-
 count of these Transactions. Let them there-
 fore take which they please; and then they will
 soon see how much they have mended the Mat-
 ter, and what fewer Difficulties they have to en-
 counter with, now they have rejected the Scrip-
 ture Plan, and chalked out one of their own.

MOREOVER hence we obtain a distinct Knowledge of what is to be understood by Election and Predestination, so far as these are Scripture Terms; and in what Sense we are at this Day concerned about them. The *Jews* were first elected, and then the *Gentiles*; or, in other Words, there was first a particular Call to one Nation only, and then a general Invitation to all: So that the former Predestination, which was once confined and limited, is now become universal;-- to the Praise of the Glory of the Grace of God, wherein he hath made us, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, accepted in the Beloved. This therefore being the Case, what have we at present more to do with the Doctrine of Calling and Election, than to use all Diligence to make it sure? What indeed, but to take the greater Care not to fall from this salvable State into which the Gospel of Christ hath now translated us? For in Fact, every one shall be called upon to give an Account, according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not; so that all those, who have had a greater Number of Talents entrusted to their Care and Management, must expect a proportionable Demand upon them.

HENCE therefore in the next Place we come to see the Doctrine of Faith in such a Point of View, as may give us the truest Notions concerning it, and prevent many Mistakes. For if
the

the Positions already laid down concerning Obedience and Repentance are just and valid, it must then follow, that the true Faith of a Christian cannot possibly abrogate or weaken these Obligations. Nay, on the contrary, its whole Design must be to confirm and strengthen them. For after all, what is the Christian Faith, but a firm Persuasion, that Christ Jesus has purchased eternal Happiness, and hath freely promised to communicate that Happiness to all those, who sincerely love and obey him? Can it therefore be a Question, whether any Man has a Right to plead his Saviour's Merits for attaining this Happiness 'till he conforms to his Saviour's Regulation concerning the Application of those Merits? Surely no: And with equal Reason he might say, that his just Right to Heaven, and Claim to Glory were founded in Disobedience and Impenitence.

BUT to drop the Pursuit of this Absurdity:—We see here in the last Place; why the Love of Country hath no Place among the Catalogue of Christian Virtues. The Love of Country is in fact a local Affection, and a partial Attachment; but the Christian Covenant is general, comprehending all Mankind within its Embraces. Judge therefore, with what Propriety such a narrow, contracted Passion can have any Place in the diffusive, benevolent Scheme of Christianity:—A Passion, however glittering
and

and glorious in Appearance, which hath been productive of more Injustice, Barbarity, and Bloodshed in the World, than any other Disgrace of human Nature.—A Passion in short, fit only for the enthusiastic Rage of an old *Roman* Robber, when cruelly exulting over the unhappy Victims of his Lust of Power and Dominion; but altogether unworthy of the Breast of a Christian :---Who is commanded to regard all Mankind not only as his Countrymen, but his Brethren, doing to others as he would be done by, and helping and assisting even his Enemies in Distress.---Indeed as far as the Love of Country means no more than a Principle of Self-defence against Invaders, so far it is justifiable :---And so far hath Christianity provided for the due Exertion of it, by inculcating Obedience to the respective Powers set over us. But as to the Ideas of Honour, and Glory, and Conquest, and Dominion, and the other fine Things usually implied in the Love of Country, they are so foreign to the Christian Plan as to be without a Name in the Gospel Language.---Be it therefore not only confessed, but gloried in, that in this Sense the Love of Country neither is, nor ought to be a Part of the Christian Scheme of universal Love and Benevolence.---And let the Infidels make what Uses they please of the Concession.

THE

THE Conclusion of the Whole is this; The Gospel of Christ is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth, to the *Jew* first, and also to the *Gentile*;---proposing thereby no other End, than to give Glory to God on High, and to diffuse Peace on Earth, and good Will among Men. The grand Question therefore is, shall we accept, or neglect so great Salvation?---A Question this, which every Man must answer for himself: But alas, if we cannot answer it to the Satisfaction of our Consciences here, what shall we do, when we come to appear at the Bar of Heaven hereafter? The Preacher and the Audience, the Clergy and the Laity, Magistrates and People will then be on a Level as to the Distinctions of the present Scene; but there is another Distinction, viz. that of good, or bad, happy or miserable, which will succeed in its Place; and this Distinction will last for evermore.

The Council of the whole is that
 God will be the Father of God
 men to every one that believes, in the
 name of the Father, - proposing the
 name of the Father, then give glory to the
 Father and to a little more on earth, and
 will among men. The Grand Question is
 that, shall we accept or reject the
 Father? A Question that which
 shall answer for himself. But what, if we can
 answer it to the satisfaction of our
 Father, what shall we do, when we come to
 stand at the bar of the Father's judgment? The
 answer is, the Father, the Father, and
 the Father, Magistrate, and the Father, the
 Father, as to the Father, in the Father,
 Father, but there is another Father, the
 Father of good, or bad, Father of a Father,
 which will stand in the Father, and the
 Father will be the Father.

SIMON



S E R M O N XVI.

[Preached at the yearly Meeting of the Children of the Charity-Schools of *London* and *Westminster*, on *Wednesday, May 7, 1766.*]

PROVERBS xxii,—6.

Train up a Child in the Way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.



HIS Precept is grounded upon an Observation on Human Nature, which certainly holds true in general, viz.

That Children are apt to imitate what they see, and to believe what they hear. It is therefore the Advice of SOLOMON, that they should be instructed in those Things which are *true*, and taught to practice only what is *right*. Now had not this Observation been justly founded, it must have been acknowledged, that the Method of Discipline here prescribed would have been quite useless and superfluous. For why should we be solicitous to cultivate the Mind of a Child, or to train him up in *any* Way; if there appear to be no Docility in him to learn, nor any Desire to imitate? And why should any Instruction be bestowed upon that Subject, which is incapable of receiving it? But the Fact itself is far otherwise: For Nature hath strongly implanted in young Persons not

P p

only

only a Power to apprehend, but also a Will and Inclination to copy after what they see done by others; by those especially, with whom they are most connected and intimately acquainted. This is visible even in the little Pastimes and Diversions of young Children: And it is observable also, that each Sex attempts to act those Scenes in Miniature, in the early Part of Life, which may become their Employment and Duty at a maturer Age. Moreover, the most careless Spectator cannot but take Notice, that there is a striking Difference in the Dialect, Accent, Manners, Attitudes, and in short in the whole Turn of the Conversation and Behaviour of the Children of the *Poorest* residing in great Towns, compared with those of their Equals, who live in the Country: I particularly mention the Children of the *Poorest*; because I would select such Instances to illustrate this Fact, as must plainly prove the Difference between them to arise out of the natural Course of Things, not from the Rules of Art, or the Lessons of a School-Education. Thus likewise we find that the Children of Savages, without any formal Plan of Tuition, grow up to be the same savage Beings with their Parents: And the Offspring of *Hottentots* become *Hottentots* themselves.

THIS therefore being the Case, and the undoubted Matter of Fact; is it a disputable Point, whether the Young of the Human Species should have any Education, or none at all?

all? No: For Nature has already determined this Question. An Education there necessarily will be of some Kind or other; whether you will suppose it communicated by set Rules and Lessons, and at stated Times; or whether it be effected without Care or Culture, by an Assimilation of Manners, Language, and Ideas, in the School of daily Conversation.

SINCE therefore a State of absolute Neutrality, (were that to be wished, as some have contended) is a mere chimerical Supposition; and since an Education, of some Sort or other, becomes unavoidable; ought we not to choose the properest we can, wherever we have the Power of choosing, and, as far as we can, carry that Choice into Execution? ought we not to instruct the rising Generation in those Things which may redound to our own Comfort, to their Happiness, and to the Good of Mankind in general? Surely we ought: And if there be a Truth in Morals not to be controverted, or chicaned away, this is one: Nay, it is an undeniable Truth, even were we to extend our Views no farther than the present Life.

To apply therefore these Arguments to the Occasion of the present Meeting: We have now before us a very considerable * Number of

* The Number of Children in the Charity-Schools in and about the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, are reckoned to be about 5000, most of whom attend on these Anniversary Occasions.

the Children of our poor Brethren, who certainly *can* be taught and disciplined according to appointed Rules, and a settled Plan; because we see, that they *are* taught and disciplined after this Manner:—Thanks to the Charity of their pious Benefactors for that Assistance and Support, which their own Parents and Relations either could not, or would not afford them. Here, therefore, let it be asked, is the Education thus bestowed on them preferable upon the Whole, to that which they would necessarily have received, by being exposed to the Miseries of Want and the Allurements of Temptation? And if both were compared together, Will you allow this to be more desirable than that; at least in some Degree? For if you should grant it even in the smallest, it will then follow, that this Labour of Love is *so far* right and good;—and, if there are any Improvements to be made, this would be still better.

Now in order to judge of these Things with Propriety and Accuracy, let us consider in the first Place, what Kind of Education these poor destitute Children must have had, at least a great Majority of them, had they received no other Impressions than those which the worst Examples of one of the most corrupt Cities upon Earth would have stamped upon their tender Minds? Would they, for Instance, have been taught either to fear God, or regard Man? Would

Would they have learnt, I do not say the divine Principles of Christianity, but even those of common Honesty, of Sobriety, and Industry, in the Streets of this great Metropolis? What one Virtue would have been taught them, either by Precept or Example, in this School of Corruption? Or what Sort of Vice can you imagine that to be, however shocking in its Nature, however injurious to Society, or dangerous to the Public, in which they would not have been initiated, and to which they would not have been habituated as soon as their Ages and Abilities would permit.

BUT this is not all: For Children are known to be not only apt, but more apt in many Respects to imbibe Evil than Good. This is a melancholly Truth, which is universally acknowledged: Though there is no other System of Religion but our own, which so much as attempts to account for it. Now in such a Case, the Effects of a pernicious Education become much more alarming, and more detrimental to Society, in Proportion to the greater Numbers infected, or in Danger of being infected by it, and according to the Importance of the Place of their Residence, and the Contagion of their Example. For each of these Circumstances may greatly aggravate the original Evil; each may increase the Malignity of the Poison; each may operate on the other; and all may unite in rendering

rendering those Things most exceedingly sinful, which were far from being innocent before.

THIS is the Representation on one Side. A frightful Picture indeed ! But nevertheless, far short of delineating the monstrous Deformity of the unhappy Originals. Let us now see the Difference between this Species of Education, and that which it is the Design of these charitable Institutions to inculcate and promote.

FIRST therefore, by Virtue of the Discipline here enjoined, all these Youths are in some Degree removed, and many of them totally removed from those numerous Temptations, to which they must, both by Night and by Day, have otherwise been exposed : And consequently they thus become, if not *virtuous* on Principle, *innocent*, at least in many Respects, both as to Thought and Deed. Moreover, for the same Reason they cannot become such Pests to Society, at least in the early Part of Life, as it is but too probable they otherwise would have been.—But this, it must be allowed, is not the most interesting Part of the Comparison ; and the striking Difference consists not in this alone. For negative Benefits (if they can be so called) or the mere Restraints from doing Mischief, are but a low and very imperfect Recommendation of the present good Design.

PROCEED we therefore in the next Place to observe, that the Mode of Education here enjoined,

ed, requires the inculcating of those Duties both towards God and Man, which are productive of the greatest Good to Mankind in this Life, as well as of the greatest Happiness in the next. Thus, for instance, the Duty towards God is set forth in the following Manner, viz. That those Children should be instructed betimes, *To believe in him, to fear him, and to love him with all the Heart, with all the Mind, with all the Soul, and with all the Strength: To worship him, and to give him Thanks, to put their whole Trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the Days of their Lives.*

AND they are to be farther instructed, that all this is to be done by them, not only because God is their Creator, and they his Creatures; not only because he is their Preserver, and they are daily preserved by him; but also because this almighty Creator, and this bountiful Preserver, has graciously condescended to enter into a solemn Covenant of Mercy and Forgiveness with his fallen Creatures; a Covenant whereby he becomes, in a more peculiar Manner, their Father, their Redeemer, and their Sanctifier; a Covenant whereby he *engages* to assist and succour them in all their Trials; to teach, and to enable them to do their Duty; and at last to crown their sincere, though imperfect Services, with endless Bliss and Glory.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, with respect to their Duty towards Man: *They are taught to love their Neighbour as themselves; and to do unto all Men as they would that others should do unto them; to love, honour, and succour their Fathers and Mothers; to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in Authority under him; to submit themselves to all their Governors, Teachers, Spiritual Pastors and Masters; to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their Betters; to hurt no Body by Word or Deed; to be true and just in all their Dealings; to bear no Malice nor Hatred in their Hearts; to keep their Hands from Picking and Stealing; their Tongues from Evil-speaking, Lying, and Slandering; to keep their Bodies in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity; not to covet, or desire other Men's Goods; but to learn and labour truly to get their own Livings; and to do their Duties in that State of Life unto which it shall please God to call them.*

Now, might not we ask the most prejudiced Person, what has he to object to a System of Education such as here recited? Are these Virtues improper? Are they unseasonable to be inculcated? And provided there were a little more of them among us than there is at present, would it do any Hurt to Individuals, or be a Nuisance to the Public? And what Detriment would either Church or State, our Trade, or our Politics, suffer on that Account? Surely, surely it is impossible even for Prejudice itself

to hesitate a Moment in a Case so very evident. And when the Question is put, whether this, or the Reverse of this, is the most eligible Plan to proceed upon; what Man would be so hardy as to declare in Favour of the contrary System, if he would be thought to be a Well-wisher, upon any Principles whatsoever, either to the Prosperity of his Country, or the Good of Mankind?

BUT here some may say, "We do not object to this System in general: Nay, we grant, that so far is right and good. But this alone is not sufficient: And you ought to have proceeded farther: You ought to have added a Plan of Labour and Industry to that of a virtuous and religious Education: You ought to have caused these poor young Creatures to have been bred up to some useful Employment, fitted for the lower Stations of Life; whereby they might have been enabled to have maintained themselves after their Dismission from these charitable Foundations, and have *laboured truly to get their own living*, when they were no longer to be supported by the Bounty of others."

DOUBTLESS this would have been the better System: And this will be still a most desirable Improvement; provided it can be accomplished. But here lies the Difficulty: For Obstructions to this good Work are more nume-

rous and more discouraging, than Persons unacquainted with these Matters can easily apprehend*. This may be spoken from Experience; which may teach us here, as it doth elsewhere, that Success in Practice is not always answerable to the fair Appearances of Things in Speculation. However, if any should think otherwise, let them try; and we wish them
good

* To cause Working-Schools to succeed in any considerable Degree, many Things should concur; which are very seldom found to unite in the same Place or Country: As,

1st, The raw Materials to be worked up, should be cheap and of little Value; so that the Loss occasioned by the Heedlessness of Youth, and the Unskilfulness of Beginners, might not be heavy.

2^{dly}, The Goods to be wrought up in these Schools should be such, as do not depend upon the Mode or Fashion of the Times; but are as much in Request at one Season, and in one Place as another: And consequently are more settled in their Price and Profit, and less subject to the Fluctuations of having the Trade over-stocked, or under-stocked with Hands.

3^{dly}, The Trade, or Mystery should be such, as is the easiest acquired; and such likewise as might be adapted to the *Strength*, as well as *Capacity* of the Learners, many of whom are weak, some perhaps sickly, and all of them young.

4^{thly}, It ought to be such as is not repugnant to the present System of our Corporation-Laws in regard to Freedom of Trade, and the serving of Apprenticeships; unless the Children in these Working-Schools were to be bound Apprentices to the Teachers of the Manufacture or the Managers of the Undertaking; which last Method, by avoiding one Evil, would incur many others.

5^{thly}, The Teachers themselves should receive no Salaries, or stated Wages; but in lieu thereof a Bounty of so much in the

good Luck in the Name of the Lord. Nay, I will presume to go farther, and say, that in the Prosecution of so laudable an Undertaking, they will receive all the Assistance, and all the Encouragement from the present Directors of these charitable Institutions, which they can reasonably expect. But in the mean Time, let them not object to the Conduct of others for this

Q q 2 Omission;

the Pound, for all the Goods made, when such Goods are vended and the Money received; *but not before.* That is to say, they should find their own personal Interest and Advantage in no other Way, than in that of promoting the Manufacture; of encreasing the *Quantity*, improving the *Quality*, and of obtaining a good and ready *Market*. Whereas the Generality of Instructors wish to engage upon no other Terms than that of a dead Salary; without inter-esting themselves much in the Success of the Undertaking; and particularly without incurring any Risque by the Sale of the Work.

6thly, The Parents or Relations of these Children, after placing them in such Schools, ought not to be permitted to take them away at their Pleasure; which, as the Law now stands, it is apprehended, they have a Power of doing; and certainly will do, when the Children can earn more by their Labour than is sufficient to maintain themselves. Whereas at that very Juncture, when the Youths have made some Progress, and can do their Work with little, or no Assistance; then it is, that they are chiefly wanted, both for the Credit of the Manufacture, and for the Instruction of their Juniors; and therefore ought to be continued in the School some Time longer.

7thly, The Manufacture or Trade proper to be introduced into these Schools, ought to be such, as is in no Danger of falling into Decay, or of being overstocked with Hands; but rather like the Linen Trade of *Ireland*, such as may be extended more and more; and therefore may
stand

Omission; till they themselves have made the Trial and seen the Event: To others, I say, who may be equally desirous with themselves of carrying such a Scheme into Execution, could they but foresee any just Prospect of Success. As to the Example of the Working-Schools in *Ireland*, which is commonly alledged as a Case in Point on these Occasions; Truth obliges me to observe, that those Institutions are not alto-

stand in Need of the Assistance of Working-Schools, as so many Seminaries or Nurseries to train up additional Hands for that Branch of Business. This is a great Advantage to the Working-Schools of *Ireland*; because the young Manufacturers in the Linen Trade of that Country, are sure of getting Work, when they are dismissed the Schools, and are at no Loss in finding Masters to employ them. But as this may not be the Case every where; and as it would be a most distressing Circumstance, were these Youths, upon their coming out into the World, to be without any Means of getting their bread; therefore

Sibbly, The Trade or Manufacture for the Employment of these Youths should be such, as would not disqualify them for applying themselves with Ease and Facility to other Businesses, were this to fail; or to be overstocked with Hands. Some Trades are of that Nature, that they render Persons unfit for almost any Thing else. These therefore should by no Means be introduced into Charity-Schools; because the great Aim of such Institutions ought to be, to train up the Children of the Poor for general and common Employment, rather than for peculiar Branches, or select Mysteries of Trade.

From what has been said, it but too plainly appears, that the setting up of Working-Schools, or the introducing of Labour into our present Charity-Schools, is not so easy a Matter as some may have thought; or indeed as the Benevolent and Humane would wish it to be.

gether

gether conclusive in regard to the Affair before us; as for many other Reasons, so particularly for the following, viz. That the common People of that Kingdom are much more under the Command of their Superiors, than the common People of this Kingdom would submit to be; and consequently, that many Rules and Regulations, many Restraints and Coercions, can be established in that Country, which would be deemed here to be high Infringements of Liberty.

BUT notwithstanding all that has been said, and in every View of the Matter; tho' the Introduction of some coarse, low-priced Manufacture would render this Scheme of Benevolence still more complete; yet the present System of Education is much preferable to none at all; or rather I should say, to that very corrupt and wicked one, which the Children of our Poor would otherwise have received. Nay, it is undoubtedly the best, 'till a better can succeed. And therefore, 'till that Juncture, this may be considered, what it really is, not as set up in Opposition to Working-Schools, but as preparatory for them; as a Nursery towards the Introduction of Labour, as well as a Seminary for Christian Piety and good Morals.

AGAIN: " It has been insinuated, nay, it has
 " been strongly urged, that these Town-Institu-
 " tions visibly dispeople the Country; that they
 " draw

“ draw off those Hands from Agriculture and
 “ Husbandry, which naturally belong to this
 “ Way of Life ; and that they take Numbers
 “ away from the Labours of the Plough, where
 “ they are most wanted ; to place them in Retail
 “ Shops and easy Trades, where they are
 “ least wanted.” Now it must be owned, that
 were the Case as here represented, it would
 be no easy Matter for the ablest Advocate
 for Charity-Schools to silence such an Ob-
 jection, or to give general Satisfaction in his
 Defence of these well-intended Institutions.
 But the Case is far otherwise ; and there is
 not the least Pretence or Shadow for such an
 Imputation ; therefore the Objection is best an-
 swered by appealing to Fact. For so it is, that
 neither the Children educated in these Schools,
 nor their Parents, were ever sent for out of the
 Country to become the Objects of these Cha-
 rities. On the contrary, it has ever been the
 Design of all the Trustees, as annually set forth
 in their printed Accounts, and the more parti-
 cular Intention of some of them, declared and
 advertised for many Years successively in the
 public Papers, to send as many Children into
 the Country, after they had acquired the first
 Rudiments of a Christian Education, as they
 could find Masters and Mistresses to accept of
 them in the Capacity of Servants and Appren-
 tices to Country Business. So that in short, the
 very

very Reverse of this Objection is the real Truth.

As to the continual Flux of the lower Order of People into Towns and Cities, and their Desertion of their Native Places; this, alas! may but too well be accounted for, upon Principles which have no Manner of Relation to the Affair before us. For first, it is but natural to suppose, that the Poor, being of the same Flesh and Blood with their Superiors, and exposed to the same Temptations, should be infected with the reigning Disorder of the Times; viz. a Thirst after Pleasures and Amusements, a Taste for Gaiety and Shew, and consequently a Desire of Supporting their Expences without much Industry or Application. Now, however criminal this Turn of Mind may be both in the higher and lower Stations, certainly the Institution of Charity-Schools was neither the original Cause, nor is now the Motive for the Continuance of it among the lower Class. Nor can it be so much as pretended, that the Fondness of Country People for a Town Life is owing either to the Gains or the Pleasures which they expect to receive from the Charity of a City-School. But secondly, it is not always true, that Rustics and Peasants come to reside in Towns and Cities through Choice and Inclination: On the contrary, they are frequently driven to this Expedient, of late Years especially

especially, through cruel Necessity. For when their narrow-minded Landlords pull down their Cottages, in order to avoid even the Contingency of a Poor Tax, and when they themselves are hunted from one Country Parish to another, for the same Reason, and not suffered to fix their Abode in any; what can these poor Wretches do, but fly to great Towns and Cities, as to a Covert to shelter themselves from the Pursuits of the merciless Destroyer? Now, if the Country is thus growing thinner of Inhabitants, what is the Cause of it? And who are to bear the Blame? Surely, let the Blame rest where it may, it cannot rest upon the Institution of Charity-Schools.

BUT to proceed: If there are some who object to the present Institution, because the Conductors of it do not put these poor young Creatures to Country-Business (though they have no Power of putting them, unless there are Masters and Mistresses to receive them:) Others there are, who are ready to raise an Objection on a very different Account. "They, good People, have observed with Concern, that an Education given to the Poor, however simple in itself, elevates them above their Station, and destroys that *Balance of Condition*, which ought ever to subsist between Rich and Poor." Now as these Persons draw all their Arguments against this Christian Plan of Education from the supposed

supposed evil Consequences resulting to Society; let us treat with them on their own Terms: And forgetting for a Moment the superior Considerations of a future State, let us examine, whether Godliness may not have a better Title to the Promises even of this Life, than any System which they have to recommend in its stead. 1st, Therefore, it is not easy to ascertain, what these Persons would mean by a *Balance of Condition*. For if they mean to say, that the Poor should be treated as so many Beasts of Burden, without being permitted to enjoy the Fruits of their own Labour, or to rise gradually in the World by superior Industry or Skill, by greater Frugality, or better Oeconomy; this is nothing else but saying in other Words, that the Poor ought to be kept in a State of Slavery of the most abject Kind, without a Possibility of emerging from it. And Slavery will ever be found to be as repugnant to the Interests of Society, as it is contradictory to the Principles of common Justice and Humanity. Nay it is known, *experimentally* known, to be incompatible with an extensive Progress, much less with any great Perfection in * Manufactures, and the Mechanic Arts:

* This is spoken more particularly in regard to *domestic* Slavery, which is a Species very distinct from that which is merely *political*; and its Consequences are much more detrimental to Society. Though the Principle holds true in general, that Freedom is a Spur, and Slavery a Discouragement to Genius, to Industry, and to the Exertion of all the active Powers in human Nature.

Not to mention, that even in Husbandry, Gardening, and the like it has been observed, that free Nations always make the greatest Improvements; and that those whose private Interest leads them to be industrious, and to cultivate every Thing to the best Advantage, succeed best both in making useful Discoveries at first, and in prosecuting them afterwards. But 2dly, If by a *Balance of Condition* is only meant, that the Children of the Poor should be made to begin from the *lowest* Stages, whatever Advances they may make afterward: And that the genteeler Trades, the more refined, and particularly the more gainful Occupations, should be reserved for the Offspring of Persons of higher Rank; if this be their Meaning, it is no other, as I am informed, than the very Intent also of the present Institution. Nor can the Managers of these Charities have other Views than that of enabling these Children to get their Bread in the meanest, the most laborious, and the least gainful Employments that belong to Society. For indeed the Trustees cannot but be as sensible as others, that they are called upon to maintain a due order in Society, by every Motive, which either their own Interest, Duty, good Policy, or sound Religion can suggest. But after due Care has been taken of that Point; then surely, if any among this present Set of poor Objects should exert greater Industry, or display superior Skill, or practice better Oeconomy than others

others of their Rank and Station; surely, I say, in such a Case, there can no sufficient Reason be assigned why they should not be permitted to enjoy the Benefits of these Virtues. And most undoubtedly, if any of them should hereafter be able to rise in the World by such means, as would promote the Interests of the Public, as well as serve themselves; they ought to be at full Liberty to do it: They ought to do it: They ought to be permitted, nay encouraged to grow *rich*, according to their Rank and Station, and in Proportion to their *Diligence*.

As to any accidental Conceitedness which the Objectors are pleased to call, *The elevating the Poor above their Station*, and which such an Education may possibly occasion in a few Children naturally forward, and for a little Time pert, 'till their Judgments become stronger; suffice it to observe, that if we grant the utmost to this Objection, it will only prove, that a casual, or a contingent Evil may grow, as a Wen or Excrescence, out of a positive and substantial Good: A Truth this, which bears no harder upon these Institutions in particular, than it doth upon the general Appointment of a greater Light to rule the Day, and of a lesser Light to rule the Night. Or if you would chuse to have Illustrations of this Matter brought rather from the Moral, than from the natural World; then it may be justly observed, that if nothing is to
be

be done, nor any Plan executed, which may possibly fill weak Minds with too high an Opinion of themselves, it will unavoidably follow, that not only the Comforts, but also the Necessaries of Life must be entirely abolished. For undoubted Fact it is, that those three Essentials to Human Subsistence, Food, Raiment, and Dwelling, become every Day to many Persons the Occasion of much Pride, Vanity, and Ostentation.

BUT after all, I am well aware, that it may be still objected, not only to the Conductors of these Charities in particular, but also to the *Society for promoting Christian Knowledge* in general, “That their Endeavours are unsuccessful, “and therefore unnecessary and superfluous. “For though they educate many of the Children “of the Poor in the Principles of the Christian “Religion; though they disperse religious Books “and Tracts to those of a maturer Age; though “they procure the Holy Bible to be translated “into divers Languages; and though they do “several other Acts of Piety, probably with a “good Intent, and certainly at a vast Expence “of Time and Treasure; yet it is visible to all “the World, that their Labours are in vain; “for practical Religion was never at a lower “Ebb; and as to social Virtue, or Self-Government, it is idle to pretend, that they are the distinguishing Characteristics of the present Age, “compared with preceding Times, when these
“Insti-

“Institutions, and this Society had no Existence.”

Now, in Reply to all this, it may not be improper to observe, that we are not bound in Duty to command Success; but that we are bound in Duty to pursue such Measures as may probably be attended with Success; provided they are justifiable in themselves, lawful, or prudent. And therefore the Question which lies before us at present is only this: Can we pursue other Measures, consistently with those Ideas of Freedom and Liberty which now prevail, and which make every other Consideration to give Place? if we cannot, we must make the best Use we can of the Means we have; and after having done our Duty, and implored the Divine Benediction upon our Endeavours, we must leave the Event to Providence. Here therefore let it be asked of these Objectors, what other Methods ought we to have taken? Would you, for Instance, advise us to call in the Aid of the Civil Magistrate? Or would he come, if called? Is it a prudent Measure to attack what is become a Strong hold of Irreligion and Licentiousness, the Liberty of the Press, with daily Informations; and to fill the Courts of Judicature with continual Prosecutions for the Reformation of Manners? Would this Procedure be countenanced by the Great? Or would it be endured by the Vulgar? And as to Offenders, even against the Principles of natural Religion, Decency,

cency, and good Morals ; are they so easy to be convicted upon a Prosecution ? Can any one be of this Opinion, when he reflects, that the least Flaw in the Indictment, the least Omission, Deviation, Variation, or Failure in *any Part* of the Proof, will be sufficient to set the whole aside ? Nay farther, is there any Law now subsisting in this Country, which obliges the Subjects to give an Account of themselves once a Year or oftener, to the public Magistrate ? Can you call upon the most suspected Persons to shew how they subsist ? what Course of Life they follow ? who are their Acquaintance ? and with whom connected ? And as to the ancient Practice of Decennaries or Tithings, when every Man was responsible for the good Behaviour of his Neighbour, and consequently had a Right to inspect his Actions, and in some Degree to regulate his Conduct ; can this be revived in modern Times ? And who will dare to begin the Experiment ? Moreover, in regard to Church Discipline, is this to be restored, or can it be so much as attempted in such an Age as ours ? Persons of all Ranks and Conditions are required by the Laws, both of Church and State, to attend the Service of Almighty God, either in the established Church, or in some Protestant Congregation : They will not attend.—They are required to receive the Holy Sacrament at least three Times every Year :

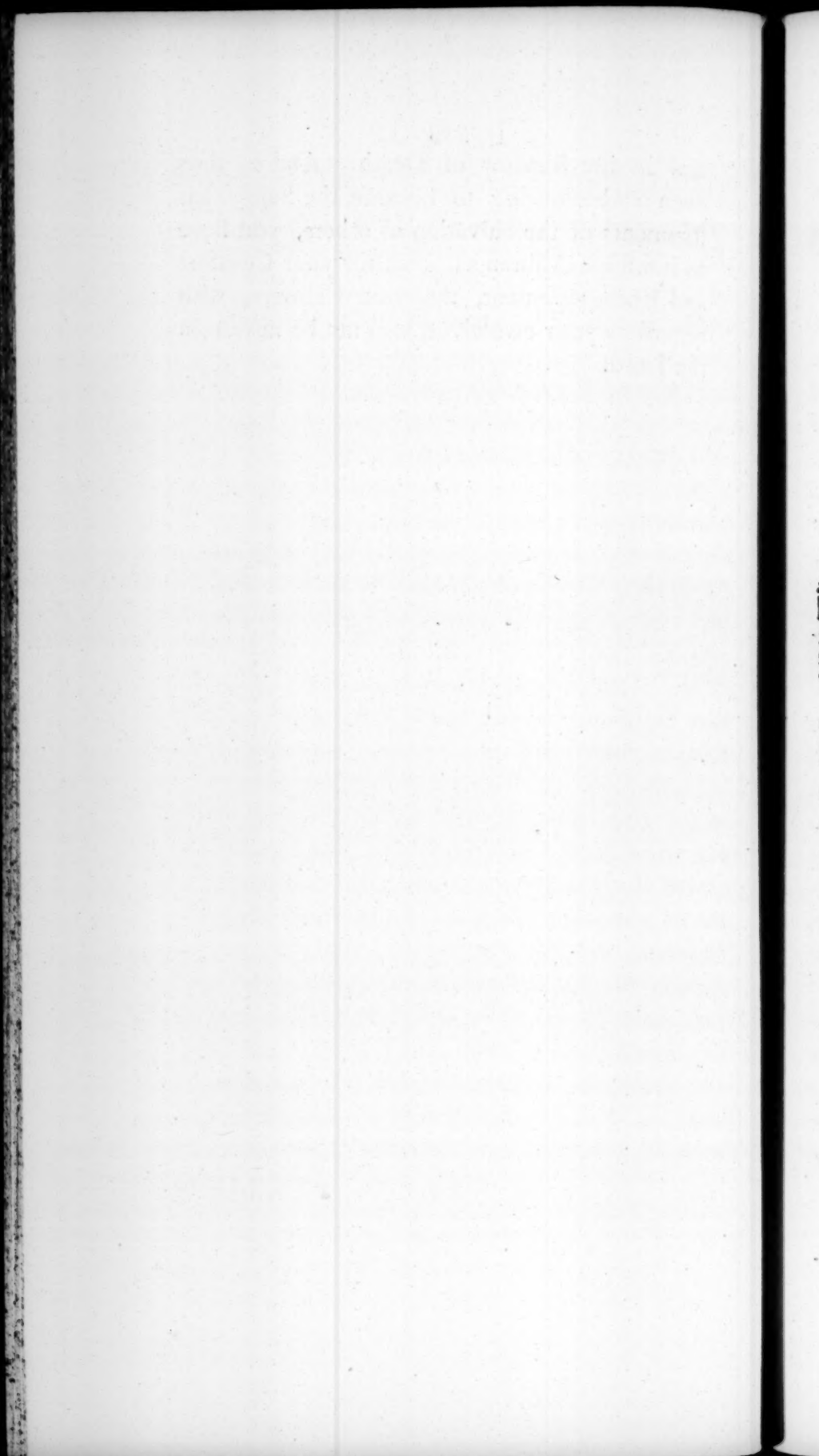
Year: They will not receive.—Parents and Guardians are required to bring their Children and Wards, and Masters and Dames to send their Servants and Apprentices, to be instructed in the Church Catechism, and the Duties of our Holy Religion: They will neither bring, nor send them. Now who is to compel these Recusants? or how are they to be compelled? And yet this Want of Discipline in the Church, and Want of Police and Subordination in the State, are Evils which are increasing every Day. In short, the present Corruption and Degeneracy, which prevail throughout all Ranks, from the highest to the lowest, are but too easily accounted for, viz. Liberty and Prosperity, the two greatest Blessings upon Earth, are greatly abused in these Times, and are converted by too many into Licentiousness, and *the doing in every Respect whatever is right in their own Eyes*. But alas! who can prevent the Mischiefs arising from these Abuses? Or who will undertake the Cure? The only Remedy that can be administered, is what the Trustees of these Charities in particular, and the Society in general do administer. And if it is not attended with all the Success that could be wished, it is attended with much more than these Objectors will allow; and perhaps with as much as could be expected,

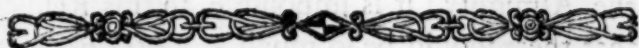
expected, every Circumstance considered. For it prevents bad from becoming worse; and it preserves many from the Infection of a contagious Evil: It gives a Prospect of better Hopes for the Time to come: And by laying a good Foundation, it will enable the pious and Benevolent of distant Generations to erect their respective Improvements upon it.

UPON the Whole; the Training up of Children in the Way they should go, is certainly a right Measure: And the translating of the Bible into different Languages for the Benefit of the common People; and the dispersing of such Bibles, and other Religious Tracts for the Purposes of Doctrine, Exhortation, Reproof, and Instruction, are right Measures also. For in so doing you act up to the true Spirit of the Protestant Religion: In so doing you keep close to the Principles of Liberty, and the *English* Constitution: You display your Patriotism as *Citizens*; and your Humanity and Benevolence as *Men*, and the Friends of Mankind. But above all, as Christians, you give the best Proof of your Zeal for the Glory of God, and of your Concern for the Salvation of the Souls of those, who, but too probably, without your timely Care, would have walked on still in Darknes,

and

and in the Shadow of Death. And in thus even endeavouring to become the happy Instruments of the Salvation of others, you have an infallible Assurance, given for your Comfort and Encouragement, that your Labours, with regard to your own selves, will not be in vain in the Lord.





S E R M O N XVII.

I. Epistle of St. PETER, Ch. ii,—17.

Fear God,—honour the King.

[Preached on the 30th of January.]



IT seems evident both from many Passages of Scripture, and from the Nature of the Case, that there must be some close Connection between these two Duties of *fearing God*,—and *honouring the King*. And this Connection will appear to be not only very intimate, but also very important, when we consider farther, that whatever is the Foundation of the Divine Government over moral Agents, must also be the Foundation of the human ;---tho' in a much lower and inferior Degree.

Now the divine Government is two-fold, natural, and moral. The *natural* Government of God extending over universal Nature, is *absolute* and *irresistible*, acting by necessary Impulses and mechanic Laws. And therefore, as the Things or Beings thus moved, impelled, or acted upon,

S s 2

are

are merely passive Machines in the Hands of the Almighty, it is impossible, in this Respect, that there should be so much as a *Will* or *Desire* of *disobeying*. Consequently this Kind of Government is clearly out of the present Question.

IN respect to the *moral* Government of God, the Case is far otherwise. For the Subjects of this Empire must be so far *free*, as to be capable both of obeying and disobeying. They must likewise be *moral* Agents, qualified not only to *understand*, but also to *approve* and *reverence* the Laws by which they are governed. And lastly, they must be endued with a Capacity of rendering an Account of their Conduct, whether they have behaved well or ill.

Now such an Empire as this, which is to maintain its Authority and Jurisdiction,—not by blind Impulses and mechanic Powers, but by righteous Laws, enforced by the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments, must owe its existence to those three great Attributes in the Deity, POWER,—WISDOM,—and GOODNESS: Power to enforce,—Wisdom to regulate,—and Goodness to will and intend the Good and Happiness of the Whole. And as each of the divine Attributes is infinite and unlimited; it must therefore follow, that our Obedience to the Laws of God ought to be altogether unconditional, and without Reserve.

BUT

BUT the Case is not so with respect to human Governments. They indeed are a Transcript of the Divine;—but then they are such a Transcript as at the *best* is very imperfect;—and at other Times so very erroneous, that we cannot, we ought not to promise to pay them an *absolute* and *implicit* Obedience. If, for Example, any human Government should be so deficient in *Power*, as not to be able to protect its Subjects; these Subjects, if they cannot support that Government by uniting their own Strength to it, must seek for Protection elsewhere:—If this Government should be so devoid of *Wisdom*, as to be incapable of Ruling;—the Subjects must supersede such *disqualified* Rulers, and put the Administration into abler and fitter Hands:—And lastly, if *Goodness* should be wanting to such a Degree, as to render the Government really *tyrannical*;—there ought not a Doubt to be made, but the Subjects have a right to redress their *Wrongs*,—and even to proceed so far as to *depose* such Governors,—if no other Security can be obtained for Amendment and Reformation.

HOWEVER, as human Governments there must be, notwithstanding all their Faults and Imperfections; (for we have no other Choice to make, while we live in this World,) it will necessarily follow,—that the *general Duty* of the Subject is *Obedience*;—and that nothing, but the extreme
 Urgency

Urgency of the Case, and the unavoidable Necessity, to which the Subject is reduced, can justify his Resistance. Obedience therefore is his *general* Duty: And Disobedience, or Resistance can be at the most, but a *temporary*, and a *particular Exception* arising from a very extraordinary Case. Nay more, it deserves to be farther notified, that if we should *expect*, that our Rulers will never give us Cause to complain, we expect what is very unreasonable and absurd. For our Governors could never promise us, that they would be either *omnipotent*,---or *infallible*,---or *impeccable*. And therefore we must, and ought to bear with them, though they should shew themselves in many Instances to be,---*but Men*. And if any further Reasons or Arguments were necessary to confirm a Position, which I own seems to be self-evident, I would beg Leave to adduce the following:

1st. If our Governors are *but Men*, we likewise are *but Men*, who are to be governed by them. Consequently we are liable to every Imperfection, and we may be guilty of every Fault, which can be ascribed to them. We may be deficient in *Judgement*, we may want *Goodness* of Heart, and *Rectitude* of Intention as well as they. We may misapprehend thro' the *Defect* of our *natural* Capacities; and we may mistake through the Want of necessary Information, and because we do not, and perhaps

we

we cannot know the Whole of the Case. These Things are at least very possible;---not to mention, that we may conceive some Dislike and Prejudice against our Superiors, and view all their Actions with jaundiced Eyes, merely because they are—*our Superiors*. For alas! Human Nature is but too prone to Envy and Detraction: And the higher any one is in Rank and Station, the stronger is the Temptation to supplant him, or at least to level him with ourselves.

2dly. As we may thus become the Dupes of our own deceitful Hearts, we are at least equally in Danger of being deceived by others. And that this is a common Case, is what no Man can doubt, if he has ever lived in the World, and conversed with Mankind. Nay, it is observeable, that those officious Beings, who are the most forward in offering their Services to teach us to descry the Faults and Miscarriages of our Governors are generally the Persons, who ought to be the most distrusted, as having some sinister End in View. For the loudest Pretenders to Patriotism and public Virtue, are frequently those, who mean the least real public Good: And who only wish to erect their own Fortunes on the Ruin of their Country.

BUT 3dly. Supposing even that neither of these Cases should happen:---And granting also, that after having made due Allowances for human
man

man Faults and Imperfections ;—there should nevertheless remain great Blemishes, and very considerable Faults in Government, which ought to be corrected :---Still let us firmly hold the Balance :---Let us weigh and coolly deliberate, whether an Attempt to cure the Disease by *violent Measures*, may not be attended with worse Consequences than the Disease itself. Certainly this is no bad Caution in any Case: Nay, it is such as in most Cases; it would be the highest Imprudence not to make Use of. Why therefore should it be omitted in that particular Case, where of all others it is the most necessary to be observed ;---and where the Want of attending to it may draw on the most fatal Consequences?

HOWEVER, after all that has been said by Way of Caution and Circumspection; it ought not to be denied, but that Cases may arise, where Resistance is not only allowable, but even justifiable, and perhaps meritorious :----Cases, where no other Remedy can be applied ;---And consequently where this, dangerous as it is, ought to be preferred to Submission, as the lesser Evil of the two.

HERE then, some will ask with Eagerness and Impatience,---“ Which are those excepted “ Cases? And how are we to distinguish them? “ *Describe*, and *define* them, that we may not “ mistake in so capital a Matter.”

Now,

Now, however forward some Men, and some Writers on Government, may have been to gratify this *dangerous* Curiosity ;— and what Pains soever they may have taken to describe the exact Boundaries between Obedience and Resistance :— Yet it is very observable, that neither the Holy Scriptures, nor the *English* Constitution give any Countenance to such Enquiries. They do not mark out the Line between them: Nor do they ever shew, where Obedience is to end, and Resistance to begin. On the contrary, they inculcate Obedience as a general Duty ;— and leave the Exceptions to the natural Sense and Feelings of Mankind ; which indeed are seldom wanting to advertise them in any Case, *where a Duty is to be relaxed*. — It is true, the Precepts in Scripture, which require Obedience to the higher Powers, urge such Motives, as by a natural Construction may imply, that without such Motives, there lies no Obligation to obey. And I freely grant that such an Inference may be fairly made: But nevertheless the Scriptures are silent about it : They make no such Inference, but leave the Relaxation of Duty in this, and in every other Case, to those who are concerned in it. Thus, for Example, the Reasons for obeying the Civil Magistrate, as alledged by *St. Paul*, are, — “ Because he is a Terror
“ to Evil-doers, and for the Praise of them that
“ do well : — Because he is the Minister of God
“ for *Good*, attending continually on this very

T t

“ Thing:

“ Thing : For which Purpose he beareth not
 “ the Sword in vain, being a Revenger to exe-
 “ cute Wrath on them that do Evil.” Now
 this being supposed, as the Basis of his Admini-
 stration, the Duty of Obedience follows of
 Course. And therefore the Apostle adds in the
 very next Verse; “ * *Wherefore we must needs be*
 “ *subject*, not only for Wrath, but also for Con-
 “ science-Sake.”

On this Principle it is, that Kings and Magi-
 strates are reputed God’s Vice-gerents: On this
 Principle it is, that their Authority is derived
 from him: And consequently, that their Sub-
 jects cannot even *fear God* in the Manner they
 ought to do, without *honouring* his Ministers
 and Representatives here on Earth.

BUT supposing, that these Vice-gerents should
 act contrary to their Commission:—Supposing
 that they should no longer conduct themselves
 as the Ministers of God for *Good*:—In such a
 Case, what is to be done?—I answer, it is very
 apparent from the Terms of their Commission,
 that they are no longer entitled to the Obedience
 of the Subject, as a Matter of Duty and Con-
 science. But nothing farther can be inferred
 from the mere Words of Scripture;—all the
 rest being entirely left to Men’s natural Feelings

* The Words in the Original are the following, *Διὰ*
ἀνάγκην ὑπετάσσασθαι, κλ. which might be thus more lite-
 rally rendered, *On which Account there is a Necessity to be*
subject, &c.

and Discretion to do the best they can in such an unhappy Situation :---Only we should always bear in Mind this necessary Caution, - that tho' we are *free*, we ought not to use our Liberty as a Cloak of Maliciousness, but behave as the Servants of God.

BUT alas ! here lies the great Difficulty of the Case ! Men, when once they set out in the Pursuit of Freedom, seldom know where to stop : And therefore it is, we may reasonably presume, that the Scriptures seem so averse, as it were, to encourage popular Insurrections. For had the Exceptions to the general Duty of Obedience been pointed out in Scripture ;---and had Notice been given, that now was the Time to rise, and to vindicate their unalienable Rights ;---it is too probable, that Mankind would have attended more to the *temporary, excepted Cases*, than to the standing, general Rule of Duty.

I say this is but too probable :---And were any Instances wanting to confirm this melancholy Truth, the Tragedy of the present Day is too full, and too strong a Confirmation. For whatever Reasons or Motives there might have been for making the first Oppositions to the Measures of that unhappy Prince ;---surely it cannot be so much as pretended, that all subsequent Proceedings could be justified by Virtue of the same Plea. Nay, it is a notorious Fact, that while Liberty was the Cry of the self-named Patriots of those Days, their real Aim

was to *enslave* their Fellow-Subjects, as well as to *dethrone* and *murder* their Prince.

AND as the Holy Scriptures are found to be thus averse to the giving any Countenance to popular Tumults and Insurrections,---it is very observable, that the *English* Constitution acts with the like Caution and Reserve. For the Boundary Line between Resistance and Obedience is no more marked out by the Laws of *England*, than it is by the Góspel of Christ---Cases and Exceptions there certainly are, in which it would be right not to obey, and even to repel Force by Force. But nevertheless the *English* Constitution doth not point out those Cases,---for Fear, that Mankind should make a bad Use of such an Interpretation;---for Fear, that crafty and designing Men should mislead the giddy Populace to deem that to be a legal Liberty, which in Truth and Reality is no better than rampant Licentiousness, and lawless Anarchy:---And which therefore must, in the Course of Things, end in the Despotism and Tyranny of some cunning, bold Usurper.

BUT after all:---Some there are, who would say, or rather *insinuate*:---For surely the Propositions are too bare-faced to appear in open Day;---and therefore I add, some would *covertly insinuate*, that all these Cautions and Remarks are unnecessary in the present Times;---they would *insinuate*, that the Men of this Genera-

tion

tion make no such bad Use of their legal Rights and Privileges, as to need to be cautioned against abusing them;---they would insinuate, that the Liberty of the Press is not applied to wrong Purposes in modern Publications;---that neither the Populace, nor their Leaders, can be justly charged with speaking Evil of Dignities;---that they never calumniate, never misrepresent, never forge, nor falsify;---and in short, that Deference to Authority,-- a Regard to Decency and good Order,--- and a Reverence to Government, are the distinguishing Characteristics of the present Age.

Now, my Brethren, if these Things be so, I will freely own, that a Discourse of this Nature is altogether unnecessary and superfluous:--- Nay, I will go farther, and not scruple to declare, that the very Observance of the present Solemnity ought to be discontinued, as being an Institution, in which, happily for us, we have no Concern.

BUT alas, if the very Reverse of all this be strictly true :-- If the same Principles and Maxims are now returning, which spread so much Misery over these Kingdoms once before;---if the same Republican Schemes are again in Agitation; --the same Plans now forming anew;--- and the same Engines of Destruction again at Work to pull down and demolish our goodly Fabrics both in Church and State :---then surely it behoves us to be doubly on our Guard;---
surely

surely the * Institution of the present Solemnity ought to be retained, as a necessary *Warning* and *Memento*;---and every true, and sincere Preacher of the Gospel ought to cry aloud, and spare not.

BUT above all, when we consider the respective Motives for Opposition in former Times, and in the present;---and compare the Grievances then *actually* felt, with those which are now *pretended* to be felt;---a just Indignation must arise in every honest Breast.---For it is impossible even for Blindness itself not to see the Difference. And when we consider farther, that the Prince on the Throne has made a voluntary Sacrifice of Part of his antient Prerogative; that both Houses of Parliament have done the same in many Instances;---and that the Liberty of the Press, and the Liberty of the Subject have been extended of late Years, and are still extending, beyond what was ever thought possible in former Times;---to what other Cause can we impute the present factious Behaviour of too many in this Nation, but to a settled Plan, and a premeditated Design of over-turning the Constitution?---In fact, nothing short of this can

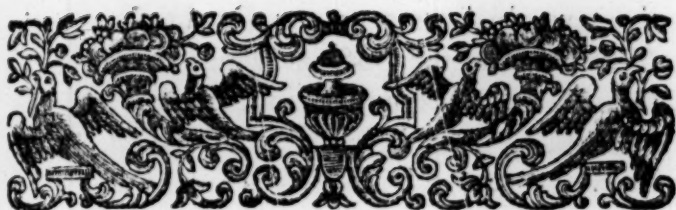
* The Institution *of* the Day, and the Service *for* the Day are two very different Things. The Institution may be justifiable on Principles, which will not, indeed cannot justify every Expression in the present Service. In Fact, that Service, which was first appointed in the Reign of CHARLES II. but was set aside by JAMES II. is much preferable to the present, and ought to have been restored. See BURN'S Ecclesiastical Law, Title the 30th of *January*.

account for their long Perseverance in Opposition to Government in every Case, and on all Occasions, without Distinction. But this explains the Enigma: This therefore is the true Master-Key, which unlocks and lays open their latent Designs.

AND indeed while we have the Tragedy of this Day before us, we need no other Explanation of what is going forward. Actions speak aloud: And while Actions speak, little Regard ought to be had to smooth Words and formal Protestations. Nay, it was remarked of those Times, that when the Fomenters of what at last proved to be the Grand Rebellion had the blackest Designs in Agitation, then they chose to adopt the most soothing Language, and cringing Addresses. In consequence of these deceitful Appearances, many were drawn in to enlist under their Banner, who at first little thought of going those Lengths, to which they afterwards proceeded. And many, very many there are at present, we charitably believe, in the same Situation. Therefore such should be told, that there is no standing still in Affairs of this Nature. They must either retreat or advance. If they proceed, they will then be instrumental, whether they design it or not, in bringing on all those Horrors and Calamities, which republican Enthusiasm, under the Tuition of cool and crafty Villainy, once before brought upon these Nations. But if they will retreat in Time, and join with the sober Part of their Fellow Subjects, they may yet stop the Career of this Contagion, and save their Country from Destruction. And, my Brethren, as we have a Picture of such Doings now before us,

surely

surely we ought to take Warning by such Examples. Surely we ought to make the best Use we can of what is thus written for our Admonition. Therefore in Order to do this the more effectually, let us in the first Place take Care to give no just Offence ourselves ;--- Let us administer no *real* Occasion of Censure or Complaint to those who are on the Watch to seek Occasion, and would rejoice to find one : And at this Juncture more especially, let us endeavour to mix a proper Quantity of the *Wisdom* of the Serpent with the *Innocence* of the Dove. Wisdom alone, without Virtue, is only another Name for Trick and Cunning. And even *Innocence*, when not guided by Prudence and Discretion, is little better than soft Simplicity, an easy Prey to Hypocrisy and Imposture. But when these two, Innocence and Wisdom, are joined together, whether in social or political Relations, they constitute a Rampart, which is Proof against all Attacks :--- They will enable us to detect and eschew those Snares, which were secretly and dangerously laid, and to triumph over those Attacks of our inveterate Enemies, which are more open and daring. In one Word, our first Duty is to *fear God*, our next to *honour the King* :--- Join therefore these two together by Means of Wisdom and a sound Understanding, with fervent Prayers for a Blessing on our Endeavours ;--- and then tho' the Rain should descend,---and the Floods come,---and the Winds blow, and beat upon our House,---yet our political Edifice will not fall ;---FOR IT IS FOUNDED ON A ROCK.



A

*Brief and Dispassionate View

OF THE

D I F F I C U L T I E S

ATTENDING THE

Trinitarian, Arian, and Socinian Systems ;

OCCASIONED BY THE

Fierce Controversies now on Foot in divers Parts of the
Kingdom respecting those Subjects ;

AND DESIGNED TO ASSIST

CANDID, HUMBLE, and MODEST INQUIRERS in their
SEARCHES after GOSPEL TRUTHS.



THE Proofs from various Passages
of Scripture, in Favour of a Tri-
nity of Persons, in the undivided
Essence of the Godhead, are so
many and various, so copious and
express, that it is hardly possible to conceive,

* This little Tract, which was first published separately,
is annexed to these Discourses by the Author, as being no
improper Supplement, in his Opinion, to the 12th Sermon
on the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

U u

there

there would have been any Doubt about their Meaning, had the Doctrine which they declare, been as easy to be understood, as these Passages are explicit in declaring it to be the Matter of Fact. [See Archbishop WAKE's Catechism, Sections IX and XV. printed at the End of this Pamphlet.]

BUT after we have gathered from various Passages, and by comparing Scriptures with Scriptures, that in Fact there is a Trinity of *co-equal* Persons in one undivided Essence;—we cannot proceed a Step farther without embarking in endless Difficulties and Perplexities. We cannot, for instance, conceive, much less define, what is the Cause of *personal Identity*,—or what is *Essence*: And therefore we cannot, by any Powers of Reason hitherto discovered, pretend to say, whether such a Trinity of *co-equal* Personalities, or personal Identities, can *co-exist* in one undivided Essence, *or not*. [Indeed Mr. Lock once attempted to assign the Cause or Substratum of personal Identity; but failed most egregiously, by mistaking the Effect for the Cause. See Bishop BUTLER's Dissertation on personal Identity, at the End of his Analogy. Self-Consciousness, the Cause assigned by Mr. Lock, may be allowed to be a good *Proof* of Personal Identity; but it cannot possibly be the Cause of it; inasmuch as it is itself only the Effect, or Operation of some other Cause,

Cause, hitherto undiscovered. In short, I must exist, before I can be conscious of my Existence. And therefore Self-Consciousness can be nothing more than the Effect of some hidden Cause. As to the giving any Definition of *Essence*, Mr. LOCK would not attempt it; but declared himself unequal to such a Task.] Moreover, if these co-equal Persons in the Trinity should be characterized (as they actually are) under the Denomination of a Father,—of a Son,—and of a Spiritual Agent distinct from both; these Characteristics encrease our Difficulties, instead of removing them. For when we come to reason analogically on each of these Heads; that is, when we come to descant on the Relations and Properties of a Father,—and of a * Son,---and of a third Person distinct from both;---we find, either that our usual Rules of reasoning are all inadequate to this Purpose, and cannot assist us;---or else, that there cannot be that Co-equality and Co-eternity of Persons in the undivided Essence of the Godhead, which the above-mentioned Texts of Scripture naturally, and at first Sight, lead us to believe.

* The Incarnation of the eternal Son of God adds to the Number of these Difficulties: But there is no Need of considering this single Difficulty in any separate View, or independently of the others.



The Trinitarian System.

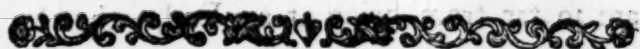
A Believer in the Trinity will chuse to adopt the former of these Alternatives, viz. *That our usual Rules of reasoning in other Cases, are inadequate in this,---* not only as the most pious and humble, but as the most rational and defensible Opinion. Nay, he will affirm further, that this is no more than what ought to be expected in the Course of Things; because our Rules of Reasoning, drawn from the Natures, Properties, and Distinctions of *finite* Creatures, must fail, and become unserviceable, *to a great Degree*, when we come to apply them towards explaining the Existence, Powers, and Distinctions inherent in, or belonging to, the infinite and incomprehensible Source of all Things. And to confirm this Observation by undeniable Facts, he will naturally observe, that though we have as clear Proofs, both from Reason and Scripture, as we can have of any Thing, that the Deity is an independent and self-existent Being, that he is also eternal, omniscient, and omnipresent, — yet when we come to make use of any human Helps towards explaining the *exact* Meaning, or ascertaining the *precise Ideas* of

of these Things,---we encounter with Difficulties almost innumerable; and are so far from making any real Progress in Knowledge, that 'tis well if we escape from falling into gross Absurdities. Therefore, seeing that all the primary Attributes of God are absolutely above the Reach of our mental Powers, and in their own Nature incomprehensible; and seeing also that the Doctrine of the Trinity is evidently, and according to the very State of the Case, one of this incomprehensible Sort,---a Trinitarian judges it to be the wiser and more prudent, as well as the more modest Part, to accept the Doctrine in *the gross*, without entering into any curious Disquisitions about it, or pretending to fathom such bottomless Depths by the short Line of his scanty, imperfect Reason.

AND having advanced thus far, perhaps he may add *ex abundanti*, that every plain, *unlettered* Man, of sound Judgment and natural Modesty, feels himself obliged to make the very same Kind of Distinction relative to the Doctrine of *Antipodes*, which he, the Trinitarian, thinks necessary to be made respecting the Trinity. For such a Man must necessarily reason after the following Manner: "Either what
 " all the great Scholars so confidently declare,
 " That a Ship may sail *topsy-turvy*, with its
 " Keel directly opposite to my Feet, is IMPOS-
 " SIBLE TO BE TRUE,-- or else all my former
 " Experiences

“ Experiences and Rules of judging are of no
 “ Service to me in this Affair ; and I must have
 “ Recourse to other Methods of Reasoning,
 “ hitherto unknown.”

Now this other Method, as soon as ever it is discovered, unravels the whole Mystery at once ; and then the honest Man not only comprehends, but sees no Manner of Difficulty in that very Doctrine which so lately appeared to him to be almost, if not altogether, impossible. The Application is obvious : For what we know to be a Fact in one Case, ought not to be pronounced to be impossible in another ; especially if this latter Case should be, in its own Nature, still farther removed from all our known Powers of apprehending, and usual Rules of judging. In one Word, from the Instance of Antipodes here brought, it may at least be deemed *possible*, That the Doctrine of a Trinity of co-equal Persons in one undivided Essence may become, in some future Period of our Existence, as intelligible to us all, as that of the Antipodes is at present to Men of Letters.



The *Arian* System.

AN *Arian*, observing, that the Characteristics of Father,—Son,---and Holy Spirit, will necessarily lead us, if we reason according to the common Course of *other* Things,-- to conclude, that there cannot be *that* Co-equality, and Co-eternity of Persons in the Trinity, for which the Trinitarian-Believer so earnestly and zealously contends,--therefore resolves to examine all those Texts over again, which are usually brought in Support of the Trinitarian Doctrine.

HAVING this Bias on his Mind, he prepares to search the Holy Scriptures; and then by the Help of subtle Criticisms, strained, and far-fetched Comments and Glosses, he at last discovers, or fancies that he discovers, that these Texts may be so understood as to imply a Supremacy of the first Person over the second, and the third,---not only in Point of *Order and Oeconomy*, but also of necessary-Existence,---Omnipresence,---Omniscience,---Eternity, and the like. Now, thus far no Difficulty appears, but all is so very smooth and easy, that every true *Arian* would readily subscribe to such a State of the Doctrine, without Hesitation or Reserve.

BUT

BUT having proceeded thus far, his Labours are so far from being at an End,---that here they properly begin. For every Step he advances, presents him with fresh Difficulties, and new Embarrassments: Therefore, in order to render his Scheme uniform and consistent with itself, and to answer the Trinitarian Objections, he must in his Turn act, tho' unwillingly, on the *defensive Side*: That is, he must maintain the following Paradoxes, viz. That tho' the second Person in the Trinity ought to be acknowledged to be the Creator of all Things both in Heaven and Earth;---yet he himself owes his very Existence to the sovereign Pleasure and good Will of his Heavenly Father, and consequently is but a *mere Creature*:---That tho' he is over all, God blessed for ever;---yet he is but an inferior, a dependent, and a subaltern God;---though Prayers, Praises, and Adorations are to be offered up to him,---yet they are not to be directed ultimately to him: [N. B. This is exactly the same Apology, which the *Roman Catholics* use for worshipping Saints and Angels]---Tho' the only begotten Son of God existed from all Eternity,---yet he was not co-eval or co-eternal with his Father:---Tho' he is omniscient,---yet his Knowledge is borrowed and circumscribed:---And tho' he is omnipresent,---yet his Omnipresence is merely systematic, relative, and local.

THESE

THESE are some out of many Perplexities, which the Arian System unavoidably labours under. But this Specimen is enough to convince any indifferent Person, that the Arian, in getting rid of the Trinitarian Difficulties, doth not at all mend the Matter. For he not only strains the Scripture-Expressions to Senses, which they do not naturally convey; but also involves himself in such Intricacies (to speak in the softest Manner) as even on the Footing of Human Reason, would render his Scheme not a Jot more eligible than the other.



The Socinian System.

THE Socinian, as far as the present Controversy is concerned, seems to be a disinterested Spectator on both Sides. He feels the Weight of the Objections both against the Trinitarian, and the Arian Systems; and therefore weakly, perhaps *arrogantly*, imagines, that he can devise a third, which is encumbered with no Difficulties at all. Filled with this Persuasion, he boldly pronounces the Holy Spirit to be *no distinct Person*, but only a mere Quality, Emanation, or Attribute of the Deity. [Strange, that we should have been commanded to be baptized in the Name of a Quality, Attribute,

or Emanation!] And as to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he was a mere Man, like other Men; being no otherwise the Son of God, than as ADAM and all Mankind may be stiled the Sons, or Offspring of one common Parent.

THIS, it must be owned, is very short and concise: It cuts the Knot of Controversy asunder, and solves all the former Difficulties at once. But after this is done, what is to become of the Holy Scriptures? And how is their Authority to be supported, as the infallible Oracles of the Living God? For granting, if you please, that an *Arian*, by the Help of subtile Distinctions and learned Criticisms, might make some Passages of Holy Writ to *bend* so as to favour his Hypothesis, this is no Advantage to a *Socinian*: For he can never make them *bend*, they must *break* under the *Torture* of his Operation. Nay more, if his System be really true, the Scriptures of Course must be false; and Christ and his Apostles be ranked among the greatest Hypocrites and Impostors that ever appeared on Earth. For either our Lord was more than mere Man,---or even than a mere Angel;---nay, either he is that great I AM, which had an Existence, not only before ABRAHAM, but before the Worlds began, and upholds all Things by the Word of his Power; or else he must have been one of the falsest and vilest

vilest Impostor of the human Race, for making such groundless Pretensions.

The Conclusion of the whole is this:—The *Trinitarian* System hath confessedly great Difficulties, which human Reason cannot pretend to master. The *Arian* hath full as great; besides the Injuries occasioned by distorting several very plain Passages of Scripture from their natural and genuine Signification; also of putting the Merits of Christ's Sufferings into a very disadvantageous Point of View. As to the *Socinian*, it not only strips the Christian Believer of all Hopes and Comforts in a Covenant of Grace founded in Christ's *proper* Atonement, but also sinks the Gospel into a System of mere Morality. Nay, what is still worse, and indeed is the most shocking Part of all, it represents the Author, and the first Publishers of this moral System, to be such very bad Men, as not to be worthy of any Credit or Esteem, on account of their manifold and bare-faced Falshoods.

WHAT then is a rational, a modest, and a pious Man to do in such Cases as these, where Dangers and Difficulties surround him on every Side? Undoubtedly he will reject the *Socinian* System, if he chuses to retain the Essentials of the Christian Covenant, and to avoid representing the Author of it, as no better than an infamous Impostor. Moreover with Respect to

the *Arian*, he will weigh deliberately, and consider well, Whether this System, with all its Boastings, has any real and solid Advantages over the *Trinitarian*; — nay, he will particularly examine, whether on the whole, it be not more liable to Objections, and less eligible on Gospel Principles. Therefore, if this should prove to be the Case, after a serious and solemn Examination, — surely he is justifiable before God and Man in rejecting this likewise, as well as the *Socinian*:---He is justifiable, I say, in adhering to his former Persuasion or Belief of a Trinity in Unity; notwithstanding all the Cavils which have been, or may be raised against it. Nay, in Respect to those very Mysteries, about which such loud Clamours have been excited, he will coolly reflect, that, as he must admit great and inexplicable Mysteries to take Place both in the natural, and the moral World,---it would be difficult for him to shew a just Reason, why he should reject the like Mysteries, when coming from Revelation. In one Word, as he is sensible that his Abilities are limited, he will not attempt to push his Inquiries, either in this, or any other Respect, farther than such confined Abilities can safely carry him.

BEHOLD, therefore, God is great, and we know him not:---We know indeed that he exists; but we know not the Manner of his Existence
in

in any Respect whatever. Consequently, when we believe, that he verily is, *according to what he has revealed himself to be in the Gospel*, and also that he is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek him,— we believe all that is required of us,---we believe enough for our present State and Condition,---because this alone is able to make us wise unto Salvation.



EXTRACT



E X T R A C T

FROM

Archbishop WAKE's Catechism.

S E C T. IX.

Q DO you look upon Christ to have been made by God *Partaker* of the *Divine Nature*; and so, to have been from all *Eternity*, *God*, together with him?

A. If I believe the Scriptures to give a true Account of the Nature of Christ, so I must believe: For I find the same Evidences in them of the *Godhead* of *Christ*, that I do of that of the *Father*.

Q. What be those Evidences?

A. First they give the *Name* of *God* to him; and that in such a Manner as plainly shews it is to be understood, in its most proper Import and Signification. *Jo.* i. 1. xx. 28. *Rom.* ix. 5. 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. *Phil.* ii. 6. 1 *Jo.* v. 20.

Secondly, they ascribe the most proper, and incommunicable *Attributes* of *God* to him. Such as *Omnipotence*, *Jo.* v. 17, 18. *Rev.* i. 8. xi. 17. ---*Omniscience*, *Jo.* xvi. 30. xxi. 17. *Luk.* vi. 8. comp.

comp. *Jo.* ii. 24, 25. *Rev.* ii. 23.---*Immensity*, *Mat.* xviii. 20. xxviii. 20. *Jo.* iii. 13.---*Immutability*, *Heb.* i. 11, 12. xiii. 8.---and even *Eternity* itself, *Rev.* i. 8, 17. xxii. 13. *Prov.* viii. 22. *Mich.* v. 2. *Isa.* ix. 6, 7.

To him, thirdly, they ascribe such *Works*, as can belong to none that is not *God*. The *Creation* of the *World*, *Jo.* i. 3, 10. *Col.* i. 16. *Heb.* i. 2, 10.---The *Preservation* of it, *Heb.* i. 3.---*Miracles*, *Jo.* v. 21, 36. vi. 40.---The *Mission* of the *Holy Ghost*, *Jo.* xv. 26. xvi. 7, 14.---And, in short, all the *Works* of *Grace* and *Regeneration*, *Jo.* v. 21. x. 16. xiii. 18. *Acts* xvii. 31. xx. 28. *Eph.* v. 1, 6, &c.

Add to this, fourthly, that he is there shewn to be *Honoured* as *God*, *Jo.* v. 23. *Heb.* i. 6.---*Prayer* is made to him, *Acts* vii. 59. *1 Cor.* i. 2.---*Faith* and *Hope* are directed to be put in him, *Jo.* xiv. 1. *Psal.* ii. 12.---*Praises* and *Thanksgivings* are given to him, *Glory* and *Honour* are rendered to him, *Rev.* v. 13. compare iv. 11.

And no Wonder; since, lastly, the *Nature* of *God* is therein also expressly ascribed to him, *Heb.* i. 3. *Phil.* ii. 6. *Col.* ii. 9. comp. *Col.* i. 15, 29.

2. But if *Christ*, therefore, be *God*, as well as the *Father*, how can he be called the *Son of God*.

A. Because he received his *Divine Nature* from the *Father*; who is the *Beginning*, and *Root* of the *Divinity*; and has communicated his own *Essence* to *Christ*: Who, therefore, though

though he has the *same Nature*, and so, in that, is *equal* with the *Father*; yet is he in *Order* after him; as being *God of God*.

Q. How does it appear that *Christ* received his *Divine Nature* from the *Father*?

A. It can only be known by that Revelation which God has made of it in the Holy Scriptures: Where he is, for this Reason, said to be *the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person*, Heb. i. 3.---*The Image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15. 2 Cor. iv. 4.---*To be from God*, Jo. vii. 29.---*To have Life from the Father*, Jo. v. 26. and the like. And upon this Account it is, that our Saviour himself says, *that the Father is greater than he*, Jo. xiv. 28. ---*That he can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do*, Jo. v. 18, 19. Or if this be not yet plain enough, they tell us farther, in express Terms, that he is the *Begotten*, and the *only begotten, Son of the Father*, Jo. i. 14, 18. iii. 16, 18. 1 Jo. iv. 9. v. 1.

Q. But will not this make the *Holy Ghost* as much *God's Son* as *Christ*? And how then is *Christ* his *only Son*?

A. In Matters of this Kind, which are so far above our Capacities, and of which we know nothing, but what God has been pleased to reveal to us, we must speak, as God, in his Word, has taught us to speak. Now the Scriptures no where call the *Holy Ghost*, the *Son of God*;

God; nor *God*, the *Father* of the *Holy Ghost*: And therefore, though we know not what the precise Difference is, yet because the proper Act of a *Father* is to *beget*; we say that *Christ* received his *Divine Nature* from *God* by *Generation*; but of the *Holy Ghost* we say, as the *Scriptures* do, that he *proceedeth from the Father*, *Jo. xv. 26.* and is the *Spirit* not of the *Father* only, but of the *Son* also, *Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 9. Phil. i. 19. 1 Pet. i. 11.*



S E C T. XV.

Q. WHAT does the *Third Part* of your Creed contain?

A. It contains all that is needful to be known, and professed by us, with Relation to the *Holy Ghost*.

Q. What do you account needful to be believed concerning him?

A. Not only that there is a *Holy Ghost*; but that he is the *Third Person* in the ever-blessed *Trinity*; and partakes, as such, of the *same Divine Nature* with the *Father*, and the *Son*.

Q. How does it appear?

A. By the plain Testimony of the *Holy Scriptures*; by which alone we are capable of knowing any Thing in these Matters. Now those sacred Writings evidently speak of him, not only

as a *Person*, but as a *Divine Person*; and that distinct both from the *Father*, and from our *Lord Jesus Christ*.

Q. Wherein do the Holy Scriptures speak of this Blessed Spirit, as of a *Person*?

A. * They gave him the proper *Names* of a *Person*: *God*, *Acts* v. 3, 4.---*Lord*, *2 Cor.* iii. 17. ---*The Spirit*, *1 Sam.* xvi. 14. *Jo.* xvi. 13.---*The Comforter*, *Jo.* xiv. 26. xvi. 7, &c. * They ascribe to him the *Properties* of a *Person*; *Understanding*, *1 Cor.* ii. 11.---*Will*, *1 Cor.* xii. 11. * They represent him as doing *Personal Acts*: He is *sent*, he *Cometh*, *Goeth*, *Hearerh*, *Teacheth*, *Jo.* xiv. 26. xv. 26, 27. *Jo.* xvi. 7, 13, &c.---*Is Tempted*, *Resisted*, *Grieved*, *Eph.* iv. 30.---*Speaketh*, *Commandeth*, *Intercedeth*, *Acts* x. 19. xiii. 2. *Rom.* viii. 26. * They join him with those who are confessedly *Persons*, viz. *God the Father*, and our *Lord Jesus Christ*. In the Form of *Baptism*, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. In *St. Paul's* Wish for the *Corinthians*, *2 Cor.* xiii. 14. In *St. John's* Catalogue of *Witnesses*, *1 Jo.* v. 7. They oppose him to such *Spirits*, as we all allow to be *Persons*, *1 Sam.* xvi. 14. * They represent him under *Personal Apparitions*, *Mat.* iii. 16. *Acts* ii. 3. and by all this undoubtedly assure us, that he is a *Person*.

Q. By what Arguments from the Holy Scriptures do you prove, that he is a *Divine Person*?

A. By the same by which I before shewed the *Son* so to be. They ascribe to him the
Names

Names of God, Acts v. 3, 4. 2 Cor. iii. 17.---The Attributes of God, Heb. ix. 14. Psal. cxxxix. 7. Job xxvi. 13.---The Honour of God. They tell us, that he is the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12.---That a Sin may be immediately committed against him, Mat. xii. 31.---That his dwelling in us, makes our Bodies the Temples of God. 1 Cor. iii. 16.---That Christ, by being conceived by him, became the Son of God, Luke i. 35.---They teach us to baptize in his Name, together with those of the Father, and Son, Mat. xxviii. 19.---And shew us even St. Paul himself paying a Religious Invocation to him, 1 Thes. iii. 12, 13. 2 Thes. iii. 3, &c.

Q. How do you prove him not only to be a Divine Person, but a Person distinct both from the Father and the Son?

A. He proceedeth from the Father, and therefore is not the Father, *Jo xv. 26.---He is sent by the Son; and therefore is not the Son, Jo. xvi. 7.---He is sent, sometimes by the Father, in the Name of the Son; and sometimes by the Son, from the Father; and therefore is neither the Father, nor the Son, Jo. xiv. 26. xv. 26.*

Q. But did not you before say, that there is but one God? And how now do you say, that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God?

A. That there is but one God, the Holy Scriptures plainly declare; and even Reason

itself confirms it to us. And yet the same Scriptures as plainly declare, every one of these three to be *God*. And the only Way we know of reconciling these two, seemingly contrary Assertions, is to say, that these three partake of *one*, and the *same Divine Nature*, communicated from the *Father* to the *Son*; and from *both* to the *Holy Ghost*; and that therefore they together make but *one God*.

Q. How can it be possible that three distinct *Persons* should so partake of the *One Divine Nature*, or *Essence*, as All together to make but *One God*?

A. That is not my Concern to determine: This I am sure, that if the *Scriptures* be (as we all allow that they are) the *Word of God*, what they plainly deliver must be true, because it is, in effect, delivered by God himself; who can neither be himself deceived, nor will deceive me. Now that they deliver both these Propositions to me; that *the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God*; and yet, *that there are not Three Gods, but One God*: I am as sure, as I can be of any Thing that is spoken or written, for my Understanding. That therefore both these Assertions are true, and credible, I am sure. But how, or after what Manner, I am to understand them, so as to remove all Shew of Contradiction in them, this the Holy Scriptures have not revealed; nor do

I therefore presume to pronounce any Thing, more particularly concerning it.

Q. Why then do you say that they are *Three Persons*, and but *One God*, in the *Divine Essence*?

A. Because I know not how better to express the *Unity*, and *Distinction* of them; and they are *Terms* which the *Church* has long received; and I see no Reason to depart from them, unless I knew of some better and more apt Expressions to use in their Stead.



EXTRACT



E X T R A C T

F R O M

Bishop BUTLER's Analogy.

Part II. Chap. I. Pages 222 — 224. — 3d Edit.

THE Essence of *Natural* Religion may be said to consist in religious Regards to *God the Father Almighty*: And the Essence of *revealed* Religion, as distinguished from natural, to consist in Religious Regards to the *Son*, and to the *Holy Ghost*. And the Obligations we are under, of paying these religious Regards to each of these DIVINE PERSONS respectively, arises from the respective Relations, which they each stand in to us. How these Relations are made known, whether by Reason or Revelation, makes *no Alteration* in the Case; because the Duties arise out of the Relations themselves, not out of the Manner in which we are informed of them. The Son and Spirit have each his proper Office, in that great Dispensation of Providence, the Redemption of the World; the one our *Mediator*, the other our *Sanctifier*. Does not then the Duty of religious Regards to both these Divine Persons, as immediately arise to the View of Reason, out of the very Nature of these

these Offices and Relations; as the inward Good-Will and kind Intention, which we owe to our Fellow Creatures, arises out of the common Relations between us and them? But it will be asked, "What are the inward religious Regards, appearing thus obviously due to the Son and Holy Spirit, as arising not merely from *Command* in Scripture, but from the very *Nature* of the revealed Relations, which they stand in to us?" I answer, The religious Regards of Reverence, Honour, Love, Gratitude, Fear, Hope. In what external Manner, this inward Worship is to be expressed, is a Matter of pure revealed Command; as perhaps the external Manner, in which God the Father is to be worshipped, may be more so than we are ready to think: But the Worship, the internal Worship itself, to the Son and Holy Ghost, is no farther Matter of pure revealed Command, than as the Relations they stand in to us, are Matter of pure Revelation: For the Relations being known, the Obligations to such internal Worship are *Obligations of Reason*, arising out of those Relations themselves. In short, the History of the Gospel as immediately shews us the *Reason* of these Obligations, as it shews us the *Meaning* of the Words, Son and Holy Ghost.

F I N I S.

Preparing for the Press,

A Confutation of some Parts of Mr. LOCK's
Treatise on the true Original, Extent, and
End of Civil Government: Wherein the following
Positions of Mr. Lock and his Followers will be
particularly considered and examined, viz. 1. That
every Man in Society either is, or ought to be, his
own Legislator, his own Governor, and his own
Director. 2dly. That all Taxes whatsoever [even
for the Support of the State, and for the Payment
of its Debts] ought to be considered as mere Free-
Gifts, or voluntary Donations. 3dly. That in the
Affairs of Taxation and Legislation, if any Person
can have a Right to tax another, or to make Laws
to bind him, without his own Consent, in some De-
gree, he has a Right in all Degrees: or in other
Words, that there can be no Medium between a
Right to discretionary Power, and a Right to ar-
bitrary Power in the Affairs of Taxation and Le-
gislation. And, 4thly. That Length of Time,
quiet Possession, and peaceable Enjoyment give no
Right or Title to the Continuance of any Govern-
ment, which was originally founded on Usurpation.

Lately published,

Theological Tracts, by the same Author.

1. *An Apology for the Church of England, oc-
casioned by a Petition to Parliament for abolishing
all Subscriptions, and Tests of Doctrine.*
2. *Two Letters to the Rev. Dr. KIPPIS: 1st.
Concerning Church Authority in Matters of Faith;
and, 2dly, concerning the original Doctrine of the
Church of England respecting Calvinism.*
3. *Religious Intolerance no Part of the general
Plan, either of the Mosaic or Christian Dispensation.*

s
d
g
e
t
is
n
n
t
-
e
n
s
-
r
a
-
-
o
-
.

-
r
.
s
?
?